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Incorporating Review of Reviews

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POEMS: by *Anthony Cronin; Morris Cox; John Bayliss*

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CHICKEN COOP

PATRICK GALVIN

Once upon a time and a good time coming
It was too, they told me the story.
But why tell me when I alone know the fluffy yarn:
Never upon any time but the time they made
Came down upon us all, not once but twice or more.
Let me tell the tale of the Chicken Coop.

When the Cock of the ultra barmy world
Fell upon a matchbox and picked up a mad sixpence
And shot all opposing ducks with brain-water,
The quiet unmanageable hens of the feathered house
Chopped off his head and watched it squiggle and squirt
In the Victorian silence that ruled the modern mansion.

This, without any doubt of shape or cold fancy
Was a minor upheaval in the clucking coop.
To see the white silk blood of the cock was one thing
But to be confronted with four fat hens
Spreading sour butter on blackrationed bread
And gulping jars of pink jam like angels was another!

There would have to be sane-holy discussion,
A meeting or something to settle the half matter.
There sat the Chief hen, fat and chewing a smoke-leaf
Pretending he did not agree knowing that he did.
All the other hens clucked and mucked about
Telling each other the opposite to what they thought.

Should there or should there not be an objection
To the progressive use of paying pennies to oblige nature?
Should male hens be allowed to visit female ducks
In the bawdiness of their boudoir after midnight?
No agreement was reached on this sensitive point
And they clucked clacked, clacked clucked till the small hours.

Then to the surprise of no one at all
They murdered each other with kindness,
Wore pink multi-coloured under-wear to celebrate
And danced over the dead breathing body of the cock.
To have a whooly was one thing
But to have a skip-jap scamping dance in misery was not!

Four pots of jellied jam were ordered
Along with a contingent of nuts, bolts, guns,
Bombs or green eggs, several thick slices of propanenda
To conceal the not quite so obvious intent
Of the feathered smoking one and the McGragh whippet
That sat sulking and mulking in the half hole.

All the other hens were plucked to the white bone
And now fluttered about naked and covering their places
To keep the cold thoughts away from their eyes.
Lemon—bitter and tasteless—was eaten or devoured
And amid the clocking and mocking of the far seeing naive
They danced themselves to death and mother glory.

Now there is nothing in the Chicken Coop
Save perhaps a bucket or two of crimson soup
That the few invading peacocks washed their tails in.
Feathers paint the walls in gaudy colours
And the drunken Hamlet of his distant calling Father
Sits pondering on the use of reason: reason is the question.

WAITING

MORRIS COX

After the broken threads of rain
I drop in warm corn amid the poppies
and scatter the beads that have done showering.

My lover comes down like a weather-cock
clean and burnished by the winds:
a bell tolls while he looks for me.

Ey! his coat is smart and his cheeks rosy:
he wears a poppy in his hat.
I tremble as he climbs the stile.

He looks for me by ditch and hedge,
(his hands hang down, their toil dropped out,)
in long grass, docks and fern and brambles,

in hay-riff, mint and stinging-nettles!
he looks for me, but he cannot find me . . .
Then O! he sees me, spidered in the corn

and laughing, leaps to lift me up
and thrust away my waiting threads
and free me from my lonely bond!

Editorial

A FEW WORDS ON FESTIVAL ENGLISH

This is a criticism, not of the South Bank Exhibition, but of the official language used to describe it. Anyone who visits the Exhibition must be struck by the contrast between the workmanlike job done by the architects, artists and display designers and the floundering of the 'commentary'. The buildings are discreetly fashionable and there is a nice suggestion of a box of tricks in walls disappearing into windows, flying staircases, poised concrete and fire under water. The Exhibition is organised, however, by Theme Conveners, and when hardened recipients of culture hear the words 'Theme Conveners', they know what is coming. They will expect to find large quantities of descriptive matter written in the language known as 'Worthington', 'Home Programme', or 'Festival English'.

I reject the title 'Worthington' because I am sure Worthingtons, or their advertising agents, did not invent the style, but simply applied it to beer because it was already the language of prestige. For the purpose of these notes I will call it 'Festival English'.

Here are two examples:

'Soon ripe, soon rotten' is a scrap of country wisdom that does indeed apply to more than fruit. One sees the truth of it in many a man. John Constable, who immortalised a part of our English countryside, did his best work at near his fiftieth year, yet he was at his painting since a child. This slow maturing, like those Suffolk landscapes, is typically English and you are thereby drawn to it.

(Worthington advertisement)

Through the English language, once upon a time, a huddle of British islanders founded a mother tongue. Through it, today, two hundred and fifty million people can converse together. The English Bible is still the great beacon for the language. Into successive versions of that Bible went the pride of English penmanship and the pick of English words; out of it came a resonance and a radiance which has suffused all our later literature and speech. Then, there was Shakespeare, who took the language in his hands, and made words do things that had never been dreamed of, and enshrined his mother-tongue in monumental plays.

(South Bank Exhibition catalogue)

And here is a vocabulary of some of the commoner expressions in Festival English.

Countryside	Country
Hedgerow	Hedge
Of Old	Old
Anew, new, fangled	New
No little	Some
Wild life a man may meet in a day's march	Rabbits
Wander, ramble	Walk
Fashion	Make
Patiently fashioned (crafted)	Well-made
Salute (we salute the craftsmen who, etc.)	Flatter
Haven	Harbour
Skills	Skill
Endure for long	Last
Fitting	Suitable
Heritage bred in the blood and bone	Hazy memories of history learnt in school
Englishry	English habits
British way of life	English habits

Nurture	Feed
The manner of its making	Way it is made
Britain	England
This land of ours	England
This England of ours	England

The development of the style is of considerable interest and the influences upon it must include:

1. The Prayer Book, especially the collects.

2. Sweepings from Shakespeare, who must add this to the incalculable harm his genius did to English literature.

3. Various aspects of Victorian prose, in particular, the repetitive style perfected by Matthew Arnold.

4. 'William Morris' English, characteristic as the wallpaper; I mean the kind he considered suitable for *John Ball* and his apocalyptic and reforming work: '*I lay there alonging for the green fields and the white thorn bushes and the lark singing over the corn, and the talk of good fellows round the ale-house bench and the babble of little children, and the team on the road and the beasts a-field*' etc., etc., or '*the man must be hard to move indeed who is not moved as he turns the corner of one of our commonplace English highways*', etc., etc., or (in a lecture) '*if we really care for art we shall not put up with something or other, but shall choose honest whitewash instead, on which sun and shadow play so pleasantly, if only our room be well planned and well shaped and look kindly on us.*'

5. 'Georgian prose', a term I use only for convenience, as I should count Stevenson as its classic. '*Youth is the time to go flashing from one end of the world to the other both in mind and body: to try the manners of different nations: to hear the chimes at midnight: to see sunrise in town and country: to be converted at a revival: to circumnavigate the metaphysics, write halting verses, run a mile to see a fire, and wait all day long in the theatre to applaud* Hernani.'

With passages like this R. L. S. introduced the whimsically arranged *list* into English literature[1] with fatally poisonous results.

The later, weakest Georgian prose with its ale-cans and green meadows is also an important formative influence and one type of Festival English is almost fully formed in this quotation from Dornford Yates's *The Courts of Idleness*—'*There is a time for every place. The greenwood will look its best of a morning so soon as the sun is up: this shadowed stream dreams on its way never so lazily as on a hot afternoon: your rolling moorland stretched into the purple distance, peerless at cockcrow, whilst at noontide deep meadows will blow most of all sweetly, the steady drone of insects hanging above them*', etc.

6. Political rhetoric.

7. Documentary or *Picture Post* English. The prototype here is, I think, Par Lorentz's *The River* ('*There was a river. But men came and hewed away the trees that stood on its banks. Trees that for thousands of years had held the banks from falling. There was a river. But now the river rose.*') I can quote only from memory but readers will recognise the kind of language which is now considered particularly suitable for conveying information which may be a bit 'above' the audience.

8. Semi-scientific jargon of the *skills—levels—blueprint* kind—the object of the writer in using this occasionally is not to *be* scientific, but to show that he *could* be scientific if he tried.

9. 'Modern Poetry' of the kind turned out by poets, often good ones, who are driven by circumstance to work in the B.B.C. and in Government propaganda departments.

If we ask what these different styles have in common, we see that all the writers (not least the modern poets) are hoping to instruct, to moralise, and to edify. Matthew Arnold and the documentaries do it by repetition, and the Prayer Book by screwing the language up to the verge of poetry, and so on. Festival English is an ungainly combination of them all, because it is essentially didactic. This then is the secret: it is for this that the frowsy rag-bag of phrases is turned out in the hope that by putting on everything at once (including

[1] We have never escaped from it. It leers at me from every corner; it was the stand-by of the poets of the thirties
'*To-day the makeshift consolations: the shared cigarette,*
The cards in the candle-lit barn, and the scraping concert,
The masculine jokes;' . . . W. H. Auden, *Spain*

modesty and studied reticence) a stunning effect will be obtained. The smell is always that of uplift. The Festival English uplifts us. It aims at being a better language, so that it can make us better.

But what makes writers use Festival English? There is a curious relentless pressure behind all the manifestations of the style which suggests that there is one underlying compulsion which we can only dimly guess at. The clue here lies in the subjects treated: there are some of them which crop up again and again and out of season.

1. *Patriotism*, usually a wryly self-deprecatory kind ('it is a small island, this England of ours; but we who know her in all her moods come to love well, etc., etc.') but sometimes opening all the stops with the alarming rusty clangour of long disuse.

2. *Feverish insistence* on the part of the writer that he is expressing the views of the people and the ordinary man.

3. *Praise of the country at the expense of the town.* The country is full of hereditary craftsmen, weatherwise, hedgewise and ditchwise, satisfied with their lot and proud of their work (handiwork); the townsmen, though not so weatherwise, etc., make up for this to some extent by frequent expeditions to the country whence they return refreshed in body and mind (by the hedges and ditches).

4. *Everything is hand-made, or ought to be*, with an implication that factory workers are mostly skilled craftsmen who have been a number of years with the same firm, and that goods that are unfortunate enough to be mass-produced try (like the townsman) to make up for it by being as much like hand-made ones as possible.

5. *A disproportionate emphasis* on royalty, cricket, whimsical eccentricities, bird-watching, rambling afield, seaside amusements and the Sadler's Wells Ballet, with the underlying idea that the nation is drawn together by these pursuits, that all English people enjoy them and are the more English for enjoying them and that anyone who does not is scarcely English.

The prevalence of these subjects suggests to me that when copy-writers, captive poets and Government publicity departments use this style they are, in fact, writing pastoral. I use this term in the sense of Empson's well-known definition.

'The essential trick of the old pastoral, which was felt to imply a beautiful relationship between rich and poor, was to make simple feelings (felt as the most universal subject, something fundamentally true about everybody) in learned and fashionable language (so that you wrote about the best subject in the best way). From seeing the two sorts of people combined like this you thought better of both: the best parts of both were used. The effect was in some degree to combine in the reader or author the merits of the two sorts; he was made to mirror in himself more completely the effective elements of the society he lived in. . . . Both versions, straight and comic, are based on a double attitude of the artist to the worker, of the complex man to the simple one ("I am in one way better, in another not so good") and this may well recognize a permanent truth about the aesthetic situation.'[1]

The essential trick of the new pastoral is also to express a beautiful relation between rich and poor, but the attitude of the writer is radically different. He presents the 'swain' (common man, ordinary man, your Englishman) and expresses his thoughts in hothouse language (patriotism having taken the place of romantic love). But the effect is no longer one of contrast but of levelling ('We all have the same past-times and therefore we have made the same sacrifices') and the motive is no longer the lovely poetic paradox but the guilt which, since the Industrial Revolution showed its face pressed to the dirty window-glass, has been felt by every successive Government towards the repetition worker. Instead of 'let us pretend that princes are shepherds and shepherds are princes and play with poverty, ignorance, simple pleasures against wealth, care and responsibility' we have 'let us pretend that labourers are skilled workers.'

Guilty also has become the relationship which Empson so well defines as 'I am in one way better, in another not so good.' How familiar is the confession about the writer's 'job' —'writing is a job like bricklaying or driving a bus or lifting potatoes' (never like collecting rents or selling insurance)—the writer, Judas to his

[1] *Some Versions of Pastoral*, William Empson 1935. Chatto & Windus

vocation, frightened of the unseen nemesis which may one day declare him a parasite, but look, here are my cards, I am a member of the Union of Journalists, and your English writer does his job modestly, but with a will.

I have tried to define Festival English and some of the curious influences at work on it, and now I should like to annotate a few examples from the Festival Catalogue and from the Underground posters which are, perhaps, the classics of the style.

1. Land is the blanket of man's birth, his launching ground to the stars.
(Pavilion, 'The Land')

A good example of influence 9 (modern poetry in captivity).

2. British freedom is home made from rough beginnings. It is based on freedom of worship, of government and of the person. Much sweat went to shape it, much blood to protect it. Its pattern is now familiar throughout the world.
(Pavilion, 'The Lion and the Unicorn')

A perfect example of the 'pastoral' convention. Our Freedom is home made (like old inn-signs, tweed, etc.), therefore the best. The sweat and blood (political rhetoric) could be interchanged in this sentence without affecting the meaning in the slightest.

3. Britain was a ready-made island when our forbears stepped ashore. They were practical men with their feet on the ground: but they were also pioneers, men with feet sensitive to the nature of the ground—feet that soon grew so familiar with it that they came to act as roots exploring downward and bringing up from it the nourishment and profit that lies beneath.
(Festival Guide 'The Land')

In this example words and meaning seem almost to have parted company, especially in the image of feet growing downwards ('you must get a good spadesman to plant a small tradesman') but the train of thought (rambling, craftsmanship, etc., from the earliest times) is easily made out.

THE STREAMS

4. Above water lies the visible world of king-fisher and heron, dragonfly and lily. Below is the world that only the naturalist can know—the dim, green, top-lighted world of pike and stickleback, where weeds lean on the stream and the eel slips lazily among the lily roots. The countryman thinks of the Londoner as belonging more to the darkness below the surface than to his own bright days. He sees the Londoner emerging on fine afternoons for a lungful of a fresher air rich with the scent of the summer fields. The Londoner, in turn, thinks of the countryman as one who lives a secret, hidden life in depths of byre and hedgerow.

Both are right, but the Londoner who has spent an afternoon by the stream, who has seen the water ringed by the leaping fish or a flotilla of young moorhens among the reeds, has achieved more than a lungful of fresh air. He has made personal

This sums up the extraordinary relationship between country and town which is a grand assumption of Festival English.

discoveries to last until he can again explore the quiet green country on the edge of the stream . . .[1] (L.P.T.B. Poster)

5. The street markets of London display proudly the goods that Londoners need, and, with equal candour, the luxuries and the frivolities that Londoners can be persuaded to buy. They have a tradition older than history: a reputation that twists the memories of exiled Londoners in the far corners of the world. Petticoat Lane, with china clocks and festoons of coloured necklaces, Club Row on a Sunday morning with unpedigreed puppy-dogs and polished canaries, Berwick Street with its Soho flavour of intricate spaghetti and honest pickled cabbage. Over all the London street markets is a gay mantle of good nature, a careful abandon between seller and buyer, and a searching humour that makes neighbours of us all. (L.P.T.B. Poster)

Pastoralism in the last throes. In order to sustain the fantasy, even the pickled cabbage has to be honest. (cf. William Morris's 'honest whitewash.')

6. *Introduction to the Festival of Britain.* H.M. Stationery Office.

The Autobiography of a Nation is presented for the first time in this Festival of Britain and millions of the British people will be the authors of it, displaying through every means by which Man expresses his nature how we have honoured our stewardship and used our talents. Conceived among the untidied ruins of a war and fashioned through days of harsh economy, this Festival is a challenge to the sloughs of the present and a shaft of confidence cast forth against the future.

A combination of Biblical reminiscences ('honoured our stewardship and used our talents') and political rhetoric (the Gettysburg speech) with archaisms ('cast forth' and 'sloughs'). The feeling of strain is due to the breakdown of the pastoral convention that the entire population instead of waiting for the Festival in a mood of passive goodwill is 'flowering in spontaneous expressions of citizenship.'

I hope that readers of *World Review* realise that, at the moment, this kind of thing is our official *literary* style; I mean that when Themes are convened or pamphlets ready for the Stationery Office the authorities don't feel satisfied unless there is a cosy reassuring snuff of Festival English about them. It is 'fine writing', yes, this is the fine writing of 1951; and while the nauseous minutes tick away, it is being patiently crafted and slowly matured in publicity departments everywhere.

DESMOND FITZGERALD

[1] In an article on the *Letters of John Clare* in the *Times Literary Supplement* the reviewer (quite gratuitously) says 'That Keats and Clare so nearly met but did not is one of the unhappy accidents of history. The Cockney country-lover should have come face to face with the countryman who knew all the toils.' There is no suggestion that Clare could have benefited from the meeting since Keats was immoral enough to live in Hampstead and not to toil. There is added irony in the fact that Keats was criticised in his own lifetime (and up to about 1910) for not meeting 'nice people' (in Professor de Selincourt's words 'the taint of vulgarity in his own origin and the ill-bred tone of the society in which he moved.' *Poems of John Keats 1905*)

Notes

PERSIAN OIL

The programme of Dr. Moussadek, the Persian Premier, is simple, contradictory and disastrous. The first point (urged on him so he said by an angel in a dream) is the 'nationalization' of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company 'the income arising .... to be used for strengthening the country's economy and creating means for the public comfort and ease.' The second point was some electoral reform, and the third was support for the principles of the United Nations and friendship with all countries. For the public in Britain much more than comfort and ease is at stake. Persian oil is essential to us and the Company is not a mere trading concern but a vital organ of the British Empire. It was on that basis that the 1933 Agreement was made with the then Persian Government, and that we have poured millions of money and years of work into developing the oil-fields. Our appeals to reason and good faith have been met with obstinate phrases about the 'former' company and wild boasts about Persian ability to work the oil-fields themselves. We must now make it quite clear that we do not intend to be stripped of our possessions like some helpless merchant. This is a subject on which we must stand on our rights and interests, and the United Nations must stand by us.

RUSSIAN PRODUCTION

In their efforts to keep pace, or at least not fall too far behind, with the increase of productivity in the West, Russia's rulers are resorting more and more to coercion and illegality. The coercion affects the agricultural population, which is being dragooned into even more sweeping collectivisation, calculated to reduce them to a state of servility and bondage not even experienced under the Czars. It comes as a surprise to learn that the output of grain per head in the Soviet Union is still less than it was thirty years ago. This is largely because the proportion of four agricultural workers to one in industry has now become one to one, but the vast plans for industrial development can only be achieved if food is available. There is little that the Western Powers can do about these internal difficulties, but they can, if the smaller European countries will really co-operate, suppress the vast smuggling ring which now provides Russia with many of her basic raw materials. Russia has no home sources of nickel, molybdenum, vanadium, tungsten, cobalt and chromium. There are serious shortages of tin, rubber, industrial diamonds, precision instruments and machine tools. Supplies of these are being bought up wherever possible through cover agents abroad and are smuggled through Berlin, Switzerland and Vienna or trans-shipped at one of the big entrepôt ports, like Antwerp. If we are to take the cold war at all seriously, this sort of traffic will have to be stopped.

THE SCHUMAN PLAN

After the most difficult and protracted birth of any international organisation in decades, the Schuman Plan has been approved, initialled, signed and ratified by its six member countries. A large single market for coal, iron and steel, covering the main producing and consuming countries, has been created, free of tariffs, quantitative restrictions, export prohibitions, discriminatory pricings, and permitting the free movement of workers in these basic industries. The plan is designed to increase output and quality, raise wage rates, guard against slumps, and, above all, remove the causes of politico-economic friction which have existed ever since Lorraine produced iron ore on the scale of modern industry and the Ruhr the coal.

Elaborate and interlocking supervisory bodies will be set up to guard against friction and infractions. But it yet remains to be seen how the plan will work out in practice during the five or six years before its full provisions become operative. Italy is allowed to keep duties on steel and coke; Belgian and French high cost coal mines will be subsidised and Germany will look for the means of capital re-equipment. With the lowest wage rates in Europe, and patched-up plant, Germany might appear to be giving more than she is receiving in the initial stages.

BRITISH ARCHITECTURE 1890-1914

H. B. CRESWELL, F.R.I.B.A.

In order to get an idea of the architecture of the future, it is necessary to bear in mind what our architects have been doing in the past and what they are doing now. This calls for setting a limit to 'Past' and for a definition of 'Architecture'. The 'Past', then, is here confined to the sixty years during which, as student, practitioner and exponent, the writer has had it under observation; and 'Architecture' is to mean *building with aesthetic consciousness*, with 'Architect' to represent a person who so builds.

This definition will be clear to the reader when he remembers that the bird's nest, the cottager's pig-sty and the charcoal-burner's hut, joyous visions though they may be, are not works of architecture; nor are the dam, the lighthouse or the viaduct, however great our enchantment by the forces they combat, and our admiration for their achievement. The reason for this is akin to that which forbids a freak potato that enthrals a sculptor by its realisation of the 'Birth of Aphrodite', to rank as a work of Art, however massively it may be reproduced in granite.

The field of architecture is further hedged by the consideration that it cannot concern itself with a building whose purpose is in any way repellent or even undignified, nor one in which the materials to be used are contemptible. Thus, neither a sewage farm nor a knackery are considered eligible for architectural celebration by the best authorities; and furnace Slag—though as hard and enduring as obsidian—has never been given consideration when a work of architecture was in view; 'marble' made of the waste sludge from paper-mills, 'petrified'—beautifully veined and variegated in colour when polished though it is, and feverishly recommended by its makers—is held to be entirely unsuitable for completing the side-chapels of Westminster Cathedral; and, though the material was widely used for housing early settlers in parts of Western America, beef-tins filled with earth—however economical and structurally satisfactory walling built of them may be—are not to be tolerated for constructing human habitations.

This preamble might lead readers to suppose that speculation on the future of architecture would be heavy going; but the path is made easy by the fact that architects have held consistently to one basic, guiding principle. This principle was set forth in 1837 in the first paragraph of the Introduction to the first published writing of John Ruskin, as follows:[1]

> 'When we consider how much less the beauty and majesty of a building depend upon its pleasing certain prejudices of the eye, than upon its rousing certain trains of meditation in the mind, it will show in a moment how many intricate questions of feeling are involved in the raising of an edifice.'

In 1851 the sense of that message was perpetuated by the newly-formed Architectural Association as motto for the Badge that stands to this day as its aegis: 'Design with Beauty, Build in Truth'—'truth' here standing for the expression in the building of the purpose it serves, and for integrity in the materials and the use made of them. It is this quality of truth that 'rouses trains of meditation' in the beholder; and 'beauty' results from the aesthetic consciousness of the architect in his strivings to express perfection in his design. W. R. Lethaby taught that a building's purpose should decide its form; and the version of Ruskin's doctrine among

[1] Ruskin was at this time eighteen years old and an undergraduate at Oxford

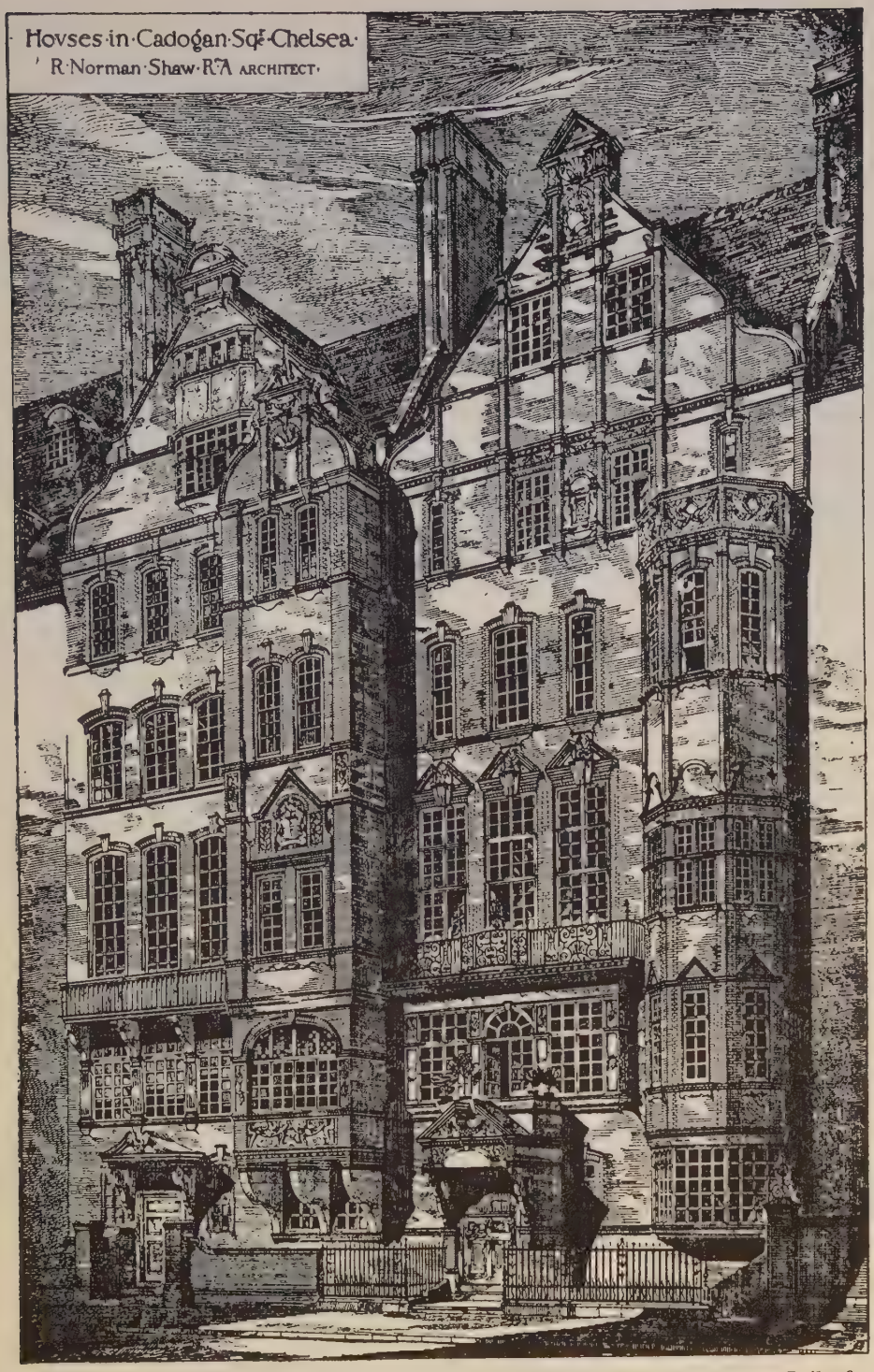
the men whose activities today point to the architecture of tomorrow is expressed by the slogan 'Fitness for purpose'. The process by which this has come about is of interest.

In 1890 the mechanical reproduction of traditional Gothic by Sir George Gilbert Scott and his followers had become stale and yielded to the more free interpretation of Pearson at Truro and Street at the Law Courts, where both sought to reflect the spirit of Gothic architecture without rigidily copying antiquity. Following that, Butterfield at Margaret Street and Sedding at Sloane Street led a movement in which the devotional appeal of ecclesiastical Gothic was displaced by what, now, seems an appeal to social emulation in churchgoing. This was expressed with variegated brick interior facings; highly glazed encaustic flooring-tiles stamped with tudor rose and *fleur-de-lis*; gas standards from the ironmonger; altar rails with iron gas-tube supports entwined with brass-founder's foliations, and equally brassy cast-to-pattern lectern-eagles.

Reaction from this 'ecclesiastical gewgaw'—to coin a word to identify the style—was triumphantly led by G. F. Bodley. His deep sympathy with the mediaeval builders enabled him to identify himself with the spirit of their work without coldly imitating it. At Hoar Cross, for instance, ball-flower enrichments of arcade mouldings are spaced as the width of the voussiors makes convenient—two, three or four to each—the voussiors are not distanced to fit a regular spacing of the ball-flowers as his predecessors—but not the craftsmen of tradition—would have done; and at Cowley, by a severe simplicity most impressive at the date the church was built, he recaptures something of that devotional solemnity which makes St. John's Chapel at the Tower memorable. Bodley may well find rank as the last architect of the Gothic Revival; but he is to be better remembered as the first exponent of an approach to church building to which the work of Sir Giles Gilbert Scott at Liverpool and elsewhere, and of Mr. Edward Maufe at Guildford and in numerous new churches, promises permanent dominance and gives assurance that the future of ecclesiastical architecture in this country will unite the principles of fitness for devotional purposes with the age-long tradition of Gothic builders. It may be affirmed with confidence that the pendulum of taste will never swing to sympathy with the pattern of Gibb's St. Martin's or of Wren's City Churches, whose devotional appeals are not merely absent, but positively negative. It is a matter for wonder how such churches banish all loftier aspirations than a yearning for the Holy Calm that follows the digestive ecstasy attending the midday saddle or sirloin.

In the last decade of the nineteenth century every conspicuous architect was branded by his confrères as a 'Classic man' or a 'Gothic man', and each group held the other in a contempt made tolerant, and even indulgent, by consciousness of its own superiority. It was told of Sir Rowan Anderson—an eminent Scottish 'classic man'—that a newly-articled pupil came to him and said: 'If ye please, Sir Rowan, ma mither says a' hae to learn the Go'hic', the point of the story being the violence of shock to the architect; and no more than twenty years ago, when the writer, trying to get behind the guard of his friend Charles Annesley Voysey (for whom Gothic was part of Christianity, he being also a survival of the nineties) said to him: 'Oh come. You can't pretend you don't admire Church Row, Hampstead.' Voysey, who went armed with a dialectic stocking filled with wet sand, with which to cob opponents over the head, replied with ardour: 'Ah! But the builders of Church Row were *gentlemen*', the implication being that no living exponents of the classic styles were to be so identified.

The antagonism of Gothic and Classic was resolved by the appearance of a mongrel progeny dating from Alfred Waterhouse at Manchester Town Hall and the Natural History Museum; but better remembered for Aston Webb, who seized on the style of Francis I, as exampled at Château Blois, for exploiting terra-cotta. This it admirably did, as is in evidence at Birmingham Law Courts and the façade of the little French Protestant Church in Soho Square, both of which mark an achievement that has been honoured by



Houses in Cadogan Square Chelsea *Built 1877*

R. Norman Shaw Architect

time. Architects scrambled to follow where Webb had led until nausea resulted. The particular drenches that effected this were the Palace Theatre, prescribed and administered by T. S. Collcut—the architect of the Imperial Institute; and a large number of Public Houses committed in the West End by the firm of Treadwell and Martin. The partners spiced their façades with the invention of a Belgian pastry-cook that had a brief vogue as 'L'art nouveau'; and it was believed that Martin sat aloof and made the designs, while Treadwell, dressed like a wedding-guest, went abroad to attend to the more onerous side of the business—namely, the drawing of corks necessary for its lubrication. Looking back on that time, one has a vision of amiable and gifted men legging manfully in a sugared syrup-of-architecture that offered no hope of getting anywhere and, in fact, did not.

The greatest force in architecture in those days was, however, Norman Shaw, whose Piccadilly Hotel, New Scotland Yard, houses on Chelsea Embankment and the delightful brick building on the corner of Pall Mall and St. James' Street, mark a versatility instanced in many buildings in London, and in numbers of lordly mansions throughout the country. Norman Shaw was the 'real thing', and remained, by general acknowledgment, without rival during a long career. His sympathies were with classic architecture; but he was unfettered by the traditional forms he embodied in his designs, which were to be identified as expressions of his personality and not, as with the majority of successful practitioners, by a manner of utterance or repetition of phrase. An exception is his treatment of gables which in London, delightfully varied though they be, proclaim their author to the skies, so that a traveller by air may identify the architect right hand and left. Norman Shaw's name marks a narrows through which the main stream of architectural history flows; and, to change the metaphor, it was he who prepared the soil that was later to sustain the tremendous achievement of Edwin Lutyens.

Before, however, the genius of this amazing man had become conspicuous on the architectural scene, great things were shaping in the field of domestic architecture identified with the 'villa'. Lord Grimthorpe's book on 'Building' gives a good picture of the House as it was then esteemed; but derelict examples of it, as built throughout suburban England, may be seen along proud miles of London's suburbia. Characteristically it 'stood in its own grounds' with a seven-foot-wide drive, in and out round a clump of laurels screening an Alpine ascent to the front door, which allowed light to reach the sacrosanct basement, domicile of the British blackbeetle. Large plate-glass sliding sashes attested affluence in the owner and lighted rooms, fourteen feet square and nearly as many high, which held a central cast-iron gasalier encrusted with the dead flies that horse-traffic made inescapable. Oak-grained folding doors gave on to a similar room overlooking the courtship of cats; and this opened opposite the basement stairs which, when they exhaled anything as welcoming as the steam of hot apple-tart, did so in contest with an untamable gush of mingled mice, fish and cabbage water.

The initial protest against the villa habit was 'The Red House' with which Philip Webb demonstrated William Morris's idea of a home. The influence of Morris's mediaevalism was far-reaching and permanent; nevertheless, the preciousness, self-celebration and aloofness from life of the cult he represented; and, in particular, its association with trailing elegancies in snuff-coloured velvet robes set off with large amber beads, languishing in hopeless competition with the gay irrelevancies and enslaving perversities of normal girlhood, was too remote and static to find general following. It was Ernest Newton who first effectively broke new ground with small houses in which fitness for purpose was linked with the traditional home of the cultivated English gentleman. The simplicity of his plans made the exceptional gifts of this architect seem inevitable, and the neat expressiveness of his elevations accidental: yet to identify oneself in imagination with the owners of these houses is to gain a higher respect for the human kind. The unobtrusive quietude of Newton's designs, which arrest attention only by the

House in Bushey Grange Road.

House near Cardiff.

Two Houses by C. F. A. Voysey.

perfection of their modest tastefulness, must have opened many seeing eyes and engaged many understanding minds; but his very merits have narrowed the ground of his celebrity.

A far wider celebrity, possibly initiated by Newton, came to another architect. Fame came to Charles Annesley Voysey very early in life. He seems to have stepped from the architectural nursery equipped with the technical mastery necessary to implement his inspired idea. The idea was the complete reformation of the small house for the small man. Voysey's activities never strayed from that purpose; the pattern he first adopted he never varied. Norman Shaw had won admiration for its civilised variety in his lay-out at Bedford Park; but Voysey announced himself more emphatically. His wide roof-slopes of green Westmorland slate, low eaves, whitened roughcast walls and accessory buttresses, were to be identified a mile away; for his designs were highly-mannered; and though this uniformity brought him early fame, it marked limitation in the architect. Voysey, however, is remembered for having changed the whole approach to the designing of small houses, and he found a following even abroad. He set himself to build houses that were inexpensive; that fitted the needs of the dwellers in them; that were refined in taste and complete works of art. He was a designer of furniture of marked individuality: his wall-papers and fabrics were famous; and when opportunity served, he soused his clients from top to toe in pure Voysey. He made a new thing of fireplaces, and new men of the manufacturers of them; and the anatomy of sinks and the disposition of pot-boards were not such trivial matters as to escape his pursuit of efficiency. It was this address to his work, and particularly his happy application of materials to new purposes (the use of flooring-tiles as skirtings and in place of window-boards, is an instance) and his activities in a field formerly claimed by the speculative builder, that marked the beginning of comparative prettiness in little houses for little people all burning to be one up on the Joneses, and thus, by making the public aware of his existence, greatly extended the opportunities of the marauding arty architect.

Voysey was in his mid fifties and enjoying a vigorous career, when the 1914–18 war chopped him off from it like a pumpkin from its suckers. He built no more: and, except for a few designs for wall-papers and fabrics, went into an enforced retirement. The reason for this was in great part his refusal to accommodate his ideas to the changes in living and thinking that followed the war; which changes have culminated in a general wreckage of all conceptions of architecture as hitherto understood, and as defined in this writing.

VICTORIAN PHOTOGRAPHY

The problems of the early Impressionists such as Medardo Rosso (see page 60) are difficult to understand without a study of the photographs of the 50's 60's and 70's, particularly the calotype and the early ambrotype which gave broad effects of light, misty shade and intense blacks, and by no means the 'photographic' true to tone picture. In these classic studies the physical world does, indeed, appear as 'the effect of light'.

But there was an irony in the convention that made many of the photographers struggle at first, to recreate pre-Raphaelite pictures, Winterhalter groups or nudes by Etty.

All these illustrations are from the brilliant Arts Council Exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum of Victorian photography from the Gernsheim Collection.

F. R. Pickersgill *c. 1856.* $7\frac{3}{4}'' \times 6\frac{1}{2}''$ *Sunshine and Shadow*

Henry Peach Robinson — *Combination print from two negatives 1861 20¼" × 12"* — *The Lady of Shalott*

Robinson wrote of this picture: 'I made a barge, crimped the model's long hair, P-R fashion, laid her on the boat in the river among the water lilies and gave her a background of weeping willows taken in the rain that they might look dreary and really they were very expressive. . . . I think I succeeded in making the picture very Pre-Raphaelite, very weird and very untrue to nature—I mean imaginative, but it was a ghastly mistake to attempt such a subject in our realistic art'

Lewis Carroll *Hallam Tennyson*

Mrs. Julia Margaret Cameron *1872* $9\frac{1}{4}'' \times 13\frac{1}{2}''$ *Florence Fisher*

THE ARTIST

ANDRÉ MALRAUX

THE fact that our civilisation has a particularly vague idea of the nature of the artist is probably the reason why the process of artistic creation evades our understanding. The great artist of the seventeenth century wanted 'a magnificent art' to fit his times. The romantic revival made Rembrandt the symbol of all that it proposed to substitute for Raphael. The second half of the nineteenth century was far from clear in its concept of genius; hence the contemporary effort to discover the key to creativity in letters and memoirs. But however interesting a painter's letters may be, they do not provide this key. It is Mr. Buonaroti who writes letters and Michelangelo who sculpts the figures in the Medici Chapel. It is Mr. Cézanne who writes letters, and Cézanne who paints the 'Château Noir'. Van Gogh's correspondence reveals his nobility of character, but not his genius.

We have inherited from the Romantics an image of the artist chiefly as an interpreter of the mysteries: that troubled homage which even those who are the furthest from art pay the artist, but never the decorator, is really accorded to this vague sorcerer. The result is that we project on to the man the genius of his art, and tend to believe that it will also dominate his life. For this the theatre is largely responsible. We feel that Mr. Corneille, who can speak for Augustus, should also be worthy of him. It is advisable to remember that here Octavian also failed.

This image blends with that of the universal man of the Renaissance, represented by Leonardo da Vinci, to suggest the men whose breadth of knowledge, serving some exceptional quality of character, would give them in many fields a power equal to that of their achievement in art. Now, Leonardo's painting has a quality of intelligence which has never been equalled, and his composition is the first in Europe to create the impression that he, like the Chinese and Japanese painters, knew no obstacle. He considered three of his works of capital importance: the equestrian statue of Francesco Sforza, 'The Last Supper' and the 'Battle of Anghiari'. But he was unable to cast the first, and through his attempts to perfect the art of fresco painting he ruined the second and destroyed the third. His activity was frequently paralysed, particularly when dealing with the Pope, through his ignorance of Latin, which this man, who knew so much, could never learn. And his way of living seems insignificant compared with that of Rubens and Wagner in their success and Rembrandt and Van Gogh in their solitude. Even the possession of all fundamental knowledge, when this was still possible, would not have created a demi-urge, which seems rather born of the desire to create a lay image distinct from that of the wise man, and a rival to that of the Saint.

What, then, do we expect from the genius of the painter apart from his paintings? The life of Van Gogh is as full of feeling as his painting; this does not mean that it is admirable. Should we expect from him letters we could admire as much as the 'Maison de Vicent'? Even so, we should not admire them as works of art. Ought he to have written Rimbaud's poems? Even the sonnets of Michelangelo are not the statues of the Medici tombs. Van Gogh had a great affection for his brother, who also knew something about painting, and this adds weight to the correspondence already heavy with the glooms of insanity. But all that emerges from Cézanne's correspondence is a picture of a man who could never have painted his pictures. Hence the conclusion: 'Cézanne is an eye.'

Further.

Sainte-Beuve's criticism of Stendhal was based on the following persuasion: 'I knew Mr. Beyle very well. You will never convince me that this fribble could write a masterpiece.' It remains to be seen whether *La Chartreuse* was written by Stendhal or by Mr. Beyle. (What a pity that Sainte-Beuve never knew 'little Proust'! It is true that he did know Balzac.) No one is born to nobility of character or sanctity or genius. It follows that they must be acquired. And the dissimilarity between Stendhal and Mr. Beyle, Michelangelo and Mr. Buonaroti, Paul Cézanne and Mr. Cézanne, lies in the fact that the successes attempted by these three gentlemen were not achieved by overcoming the same obstacles which confronted Michelangelo, Cézanne and Stendhal.

When Mr. Beyle met Sainte-Beuve, he was trying either to amuse or irritate or captivate him. When Stendhal was writing *Le Rouge et Le Noir*, nothing of the sort. He kept Mr. Beyle away from all that was not the finest part of his intelligence and feeling. He filtered him. He corrected him. If he had directed to the same effort the same compulsive drive into playing a rôle, he would, no doubt, have succeeded. Suppose he had put the same effort into acquiring that spiritual invulnerability of the great masters in religion, or its lay form, known as wisdom? He was better gifted for literature. Suppose he had achieved this spirituality—this genius—it would have been through subjecting Mr. Beyle to a chosen part of himself, for it is difficult to conceive of a religious mind without God, a hero without Honour, or a wise man without Wisdom. And here there is no room for other people's opinions. Mr. Beyle is Stendhal, plus his weaknesses and minus his books. Mr. Beyle has to consider the women he hopes to seduce: Stendhal the means of creating these women, not of their resistance; if they do resist, it is because he is fighting part of himself. The problem of the novelist is complicated by the fact that human experience can be expressed in words, but when this complexity disappears, as in painting and music, the difference between the artist and the man becomes clear: they are not fighting the same adversary. The man fights all that is not himself. The artist, in a major but restricted field, fights primarily against himslf.

Hence a dual conclusion. I think that when Cézanne called himself a failure, it was not that he did not know what he was painting, but that he could not believe—that particular day—that Mr. Cézanne would ever be able to rival Poussin. It never occurred to him to think of Mr. Poussin. It also happened that the modest and dumbfounded old man would find himself roughly pushed aside by the master, emerging with a terrific hullabaloo to shout: 'Don't you know I am the greatest painter of the age?' All true artists believe, alternately or simultaneously, that they are what they are, and also a failure. It is said that a feeling of inferiority is combined in most men with a feeling of superiority: but not always in the same way. Cézanne's outburst; Nietzsche saying 'I am the greatest authority on decadence in Europe'; Baudelaire, replying to Halévy who complained of the lack of good writing in 1840: 'I was writing at the time'; all this has nothing to do with the upstart's assertion, 'Look what a fine chap I am.' If Gauguin, so conscious of his own worth, could utter that terrible cry: 'I am nothing but a failure', he was not thinking of his misgivings about a picture, but of his festering leg. His painting was not defeated, but other people's opinion of him, particularly his wife's, was victorious. Even as he was writing this letter, he knew that his long agony in the house of Dominique would destroy only his suffering body, and not the work of Paul Gauguin.

Apart from a small number of artists, those who surrounded Gauguin were the less able to understand his genius in that genius is formed in a way quite different from anything they imagined. But no society understands genius. It simply happens that it admires the results. This lies in the nature of all society. The man who is going to be a great painter begins by discovering that he is more sensitive to one particular world, that of art, than to the world common to all. He feels a tyrannical need to paint, knowing that what he will paint will, no doubt, at first be bad, and that he is launched on an adventure. He

goes through a period of *pastiche*, usually of the latest masters, until he becomes aware of a discordance between what they 'signify' and his own latent meaning. He begins vaguely to distinguish his own individual *schema*, which, often with the help of the older masters, will liberate him from his present tutors. He goes straight to the real, not as a model, but as an inexhaustible repertory from which he can acquire the forms demanded by his art. When the painter has mastered, either successively or alternately, his colour, his composition and his material, when what was felt as a *schema* has become a style, then he gives to the world a new pictorial significance which, as he grows older, he will continue to adjust and deepen. This process is not the whole of artistic creation, but an inescapable part of it. Now each of these operations is a metamorphosis of form. This is something that society has never experienced, nor even suspected. The Society in which Gauguin lived, like the majority of modern Western societies, considered that genius came from submission to nature, from the expression of feeling, from securing a 'success', or from the strength of a theatrical presentation. Such forms of genius had in no sense been imposed by any theory of aesthetics, which might have been destroyed by another; they were born of fundamental *illusions*, some of which are still potent. Society is always more susceptible to the symbolic presentation of its values than to the presentation of these values in their profundity. Florence and Rome, including the Pope, admired Michelangelo, but were indulgent to his pitiable rivals. And indeed, presentation, particularly of the imaginary, maintained a sometimes helpful ambiguity. The ambiguity and the presentation disappeared together; the public either treats Picasso as a modern decorator or admires him as an Einstein. Society speaks of its artists as if they were marvellous copyists of nature, or prophets, aesthetes or decorators; it never speaks of them as they are.

Painters have lent themselves all too often, in the past fifty years, to this habit of speaking of their work as if they were house-painters. Even if we cannot speak of painting without speaking of colour, we cannot speak of painting *only* in terms of colour. The painter knows, although he pretends not to know, that if his art is a language on its own, which cannot be translated, yet what he is expressing is a complex form of human grandeur. He knows that true painting is not just an agreeable or striking arrangement of line and colour, any more than true poetry is just a happy arrangement of words. The sculptor of the effigy of Goudéa, the unknown master of the Pietà of Villanuova, fill his memory with their nameless presence. When it comes to painting, his weaknesses disappear, for his art would not survive their toleration. Mr. Cézanne's letters were written by a *petit-bourgeois*? The typical *petit-bourgeois* is distinguished by self-interest—Cézanne sacrificed everything to his work. His values are petty and he is not related to anything beyond himself—Cézanne submitted his whole life to one single value, painting, through which he was related to a thousand values beyond himself. If every man required the same quality in his life as artists practise in their art, the Gods would be much astonished.

So be it: but Cézanne did not talk of painting as we should have liked him to talk of it. We forget that he never talks of it at all. A few angry sallies, a few words cursing his profession or telling us what he is painting: these are not meditations. No great painter has ever spoken as we want him to speak.

Painters, Cézanne as well as Leonardo, have always known that painting was painting. But it has seldom happened, perhaps never before our era, that painting was considered to be *only* painting. Painters therefore rarely felt it necessary to comment on what was specific to their art. If they did write, it was about procedure, sometimes about aesthetics. And aesthetics were a part of ideology, not of painting: in 1876 Fromentin felt it necessary to apologise for using the word 'values'. If painters felt compelled to express themselves in writing, using the vocabulary of the aesthete or critic, which was not their own, and which they often felt to be false, their expression was most often an outburst, usually in self-defence, and

sometimes very revealing. Manet, who was often better inspired, could say: 'It is the effect of sincerity to give a work of art something of the nature of a protest, whereas the painter was only trying to paint his impression.' This was thirteen years after 'Olympia' which was, of course, an impression. Cézanne, who was obsessed by the word 'realisation', seems to take pleasure in establishing a misunderstanding. He struggles with the mountain of Sainte-Victoire, not because he feels his picture is a poor resemblance, but because at that particular moment the mountain suggests colours which will enable him to achieve a greater 'realisation'; not a realisation of the mountain, but of the picture. Tintoretto staggered him by his richness, not by his fidelity.

But it was Cézanne who wrote: 'There is a logic of colour; the painter owes obedience to this alone, never to the logic of the brain.' And this clumsy phrase, one of the strongest and most authentic ever uttered by a painter (for they are secretive and often deliberately confusing creatures), shows why every painter of genius is dumb in relation to the essence of his art; because to write about his painting seems completely *futile*. His disharmony, his vocation, are not related to the universe, but to works of art. He does not necessarily want to change the world or the relationship of man to God. He wants to change an expression of the world, to confront the paintings that are, with the paintings that are yet to be. His thinking occurs in a specific field—to alter this yellow, to find a colour to express this light, in keeping with the rest of the picture, since light can only be expressed in painting through colour, even if it be black, and so on . . . His genius can only be translated in the terms of this field, whether he is painting sea-scapes or Golgotha. So, when Paul Cézanne wants to speak, he silences Mr. Cézanne, who is only a nuisance, and says in his painting what he would only betray in his words.

M. Malraux has asked me to say that this article, or 'fragment', will be included in the collected edition of his Essais de Psychologie de l'Art to be published under the title of 'Les Voix du Silence'.

THE PARTIES IN FRANCE

FRANÇOIS GOGUEL

THERE was only an apparent difference between the crisis provoked by the resignation of the Pleven Cabinet and all the other crises which every seven months or so have exposed the total absence of homogeneity in the parties constituting the Government. It is true that the occasion of the crisis was political—the problem of electoral reform—whereas the previous crises had arisen through differences on economic or social questions. But if we look more closely, we see that for the last four years it has always been the same crisis, just as it has always been the same government replacing itself—this time quite literally—under a new leader.

Ever since February the differences within the majority groups had been evident on quite other questions than that of electoral reform, and the compromise, which no doubt will eventually be reached on this point, could have been achieved without crisis if the Government parties had not already been divided against each other on a great number of issues.

On the international issue, the results of Mr. Pleven's trip to Washington, and the tone of the speeches he made there, have been received by the leaders and even some Ministers of the M.R.P.[1] with considerable reserve. The M.R.P., although it condemns the ambiguities and contradictions of 'neutralism', has never concealed its hope that the President of

[1]M.R.P. The left-centre group of former Resistance parties under the leadership of Georges Bidault

Council would show a greater determination to preserve the independence of French policy.

On the economic level the rapid rise in the price of raw materials in world markets, which in 1950 enabled Great Britain to increase her dollar reserves and re-establish her balance of payments, has on the contrary increased the economic difficulties of France, a country that imports more raw materials than it sells. Thus the controversy between 'planners' and 'liberals' has acquired a fresh topicality: the former are in favour of subsidies to halt or slow down the rise in the price of key commodities; the latter are hypnotised by the risk of inflation implied in any increase of Treasury withdrawals, in the absence of a monetary reform which neither side could contemplate just before the elections. The M.R.P., like the Socialists, are in favour of subsidies, and they might appear to be able to control economic policy through MM. Buron, Louvel and Pflimlin. But the Radicals and Moderates, holding the financial controls through MM. Edgar Faure and Petsche, in effect determine policy. As is usual in such cases, ministerial disagreement has expressed itself in inertia and delays which were quite acceptable to the exponents of *laissez-faire.*

There have been similar disagreements in the field of social policy: Socialists and M.R.P. were equally in favour of wage increases, the Socialists favouring an increase in the minimum guaranteed wage, and M.R.P. an upward revision of family allowances. To both proposals Moderates and Radicals raised the usual objection of possible inflation.

Such disagreements provided ample grounds for rupture, particularly since all parties attach major importance to questions of electoral tactics in view of the forthcoming vote for the National Assembly. There is no possible doubt that each of the diverse elements constituting the Government is secretly but persistently preoccupied with the possibility of an alliance with the R.P.F.[1] Let but one group show its hand and the others will immediately follow suit—and I think that this will even be true for many of the Socialist federations in Mediterranean Provence. In February it was quite frequently alleged that Georges Bidault was nourishing certain hopes of coming to an understanding with the R.P.F. As a matter of fact, Bidault was probably thinking less of upsetting than of increasing the Government majority, and I doubt whether he would have sacrificed the alliance between M.R.P. and the Socialists in order to obtain the support of the Gaullists. But it is also quite true that certain Right-Wing elements in the M.R.P. were prepared to go much further than Bidault, even to the extent of trying to provoke a ministerial crisis on family allowances, which could have caused a revolt among their Left Wing and trade union membership, and thus perhaps have allowed the remainder to effect a reconciliation with General de Gaulle.

There are certain factors which favour such a reconciliation. Both M.R.P. and R.P.F. think alike on the schools question, and every cantonal election has clearly shown that on a second ballot the electors who have remained faithful to the M.R.P. have shown a spontaneous preference for the Gaullist rather than for the Socialist candidate. Nevertheless, the predominant feeling of the membership is against such a reunion, and this is not something to be lightly overcome.

The battle between Edouard Herriot and M. Chaban-Delmas, and the fact that both the Disciplinary Committee and the Executive of the Radical-Socialist party were willing to risk losing Herriot as President rather than expel Delmas for bigamy, shows that the Radicals have no intention of leaving the initiative in any approach to the R.P.F. to Bidault's party. They are well aware that their increased share in the poll, which is actually less important than many believe, dates from their agreement with the R.P.F. in October, 1947, over the municipal elections. The militant wing of the party would be quite happy to renew this alliance, which is only held up by the hostility of the older generation of leaders, men like Herriot, Delbos and Queuille.

As for the moderates, whether they adhere to the P.R.L.[2] the *Centre national*

[1] Rassemblement du Peuple Français, the Gaullist Party
[2] Parti Républicain de la Liberté, a small group of landowners and business men under the leadership of Paul Reynaud

des Indépendants, or the Peasant Party, it is difficult to see what could prevent them from lining up with the R.P.F., unless it were local personal rivalries or the feeling that such support was not needed in all departments.

All things considered, it is possible that the greatest obstacle to a renewal of the electoral alliance of October 1947 will stem from the R.P.F. itself, and this refusal may even extend to the M.R.P. The experience of these 'intergroups' in Parliament has shown that it is not possible to obtain any discipline in voting, and the lesson has borne fruit. M. Soustelle recently declared that it would be better for the R.P.F. to obtain a really homogeneous parliamentary group rather than a larger number of undisciplined supporters. Now General de Gaulle himself has stated that, in the coming elections, the R.P.F. would fight 'on two fronts', by which, no doubt, he means not only against the 'separatists' but also against the 'parties', that is to say, against all the parties he has not been able to rally to his banner.

But in spite of all internal disagreements, and all the reasons which might have induced one or other of the Government parties to induce a Government crisis, either in order to negotiate with the R.P.F. or to improve their electoral position, the fact remains that the Pleven Government was finally brought down on the question of a single or a double ballot.

Although I am far from approving the M.R.P's intransigence on this question of the single ballot, I do feel it is important to point out the extraordinary way in which the true facts of the case have, almost without exception, been distorted in the Press. There is no doubt that, after the vote on Delachenal's counter-proposal, it was quite clear that the majority of the Government parties were in favour of a single ballot. Such being the case, the responsibility for the defeat of the Government lies with the Radicals, who persisted in demanding the double ballot, and not with the Popular Republicans, who had no cause to abandon their standpoint after it had been approved by the majority of Government supporters. Nevertheless, nearly every paper has led its readers to believe that the M.R.P. was responsible for breaking up the coalition.

Seldom has a political problem been so obscured by flights of fancy, or the second thoughts of the interested parties, as this question of the modification of the electoral law of 1946.

The R.P.F. has never disguised its view that the maintenance of the present system is 'franker and more honest' than a reform based on a system of political affinities. The party would, however, like to see election by list by simple majority at a second ballot. This point of view is understandable. Proportional representation with a system of block-lists and the allocation of seats to the party with the highest average votes would certainly make the R.P.F. an indispensable element of any majority grouping which excludes the Communists, in the next Assembly. It would allow them to put forward 'pure' lists, and thus constitute themselves a monolithic party. Finally, they would benefit both from the premium placed on relative majorities and from the attraction of being the strongest single anti-Communist party, which was the M.R.P's biggest pull in 1946.

The second thoughts of the Radicals are more disguised. Officially they are in favour of elections by district, with two ballots. The militant wing has a nostalgia for the past, for the pre-1914 past, and believes that a return to this system would be mainly to the avantage of their party. But their leaders, better informed, are not so certain. They know that Radicalism has, in fact, become the secular wing of Conservatism, and that election by district, which involves the election of persons, is liable to prejudice their candidates in many constituencies in favour of Moderates who are more conservative, or Socialists who are more secular. Like the M.R.P., and for the same reasons, they are interested in maintaining election by list, since under this system a minority party can find a place either by alliance or in coalition with a larger party, whereas voting by individuals compels them to withdraw their candidates. The retiring Radical deputies were mainly elected in 1946 at the head of their lists, and few of them are

likely to have lost any votes since then. Their own personal interest would lead them to adapt themselves fairly happily to a continuance of the present system of proportional representation, particularly if they can pride themselves during the elections on having done their best to promote electoral reform along lines desired by their constituents, that is to say, for a system which would take the effective choice of candidates out of the hands of the party committees.

The antagonism of the M.R.P. to two ballots is a mystique on its own. Partly they are afraid of re-creating, on the secular issue, the two *blocs* of the Third Republic, to the detriment of far more urgent problems of an economic or social or political nature. In this, their motives are honourable. But they are also afraid of not being able to deal with the wiles of local politicians and, therefore, of having to confront the first ballot in such poor shape that their potential allies would be able to dispense with their help at the second. This hostility to the second ballot seems to me to betray a singular misunderstanding of the change in the political picture introduced by the isolation of the Communists. It is impossible, in most constituencies, to envisage a majority for a 'secular' block without the participation of the Communists. Such a block was possible during the election of the Council of the Republic in November 1948, when there were Electoral Colleges which had already been penetrated by the Communists as the result of two successive majority votes, first for the municipal councils, and then for their delegates to the Electoral Colleges. It is most unlikely that this will be repeated with universal suffrage. But the M.R.P. refuses to be convinced, and it seems certain that they will oppose all electoral reform rather than accept a second ballot. Quite a number of Moderates and Peasants are equally hypnotised by what seems to me an inaccurate interpretation of the history of the Third Republic, and share this opposition.

The party most sincerely in favour of electoral reform is, without doubt, the Socialist party, who have accepted all its possibilities with a breadth of mind, which is the more understandable if perhaps the less meritorious, in that it is generally agreed that this party will get approximately the same results under any system. They have so many planks to their platform: anti-Communism, secularism, the Third Force, their concern for the white-collar worker, their agrarian programme, that, according to individual circumstances, they can justify almost any alliance.

As for the Communists, they are opposed to electoral reform. But if it should appear that the system of district elections were in fact to be adopted, it would be in their interest to support it. They would obviously stand a better chance of securing a majority in individual constituencies than over whole departments and, therefore, election by individuals would be numerically less unfavourable to them than the election of lists. But this is not all. The district is the ideal setting for those Left-Wing coalitions, apparently independent of the Party, which can be built around the theme of 'Peace', the condemnation of atomic weapons, a more or less ambiguous neutrality and the defence of working-class interests. In this way they would be able to secure the election of a sufficient number of dissident Socialists, idealistic intellectuals and 'progressive' Christians to be able to form a solid and consciously or unconsciously crypt-Communist group in Parliament. This would provide the apparently independent ally in the Assembly that the Communists have been seeking in vain for the past four years.

It is not very likely that elections by district will be voted by the National Assembly at the first reading, but if the bill should be sent back to the Palais Bourbon by the Council of the Republic, it is not improbable that it will be adopted at the second reading on a majority of Socialists, Communists and Radicals, who will be handicapped by their own repeated declarations in its favour.

When all is said and done, the future remains uncertain: both the future of electoral reform and of the Government parties. There will be a period of immobility lasting probably until the elections, which implies total inertia in social and

economic problems. There will be subsidies to meet the rise in the cost of raw materials, but just for three months: 'temporary' increases in family allowances, provisional bonuses on salaries; in every sphere there will be those sort of decisions which do not appear to prejudice the future, but which actually prejudice it far more gravely than a clear and coherent policy of any kind. There will be a revision of the constitution which will preserve the main defects of the régime with which we have been experimenting since 1946. No one will go further for fear of seeming to copy what is by far the most valuable part of the R.P.F. programme, that is to say, the reform of institutions.

And after the elections, which can hardly be expected to produce any real renaissance of French political life, we shall be confronted with problems which will have become both technically and politically even more serious than they are today. The proximity of the elections is, of course, a heavy burden on all parties. But when they are over, will this release enough energy, courage and imagination to enable these problems to be seriously tackled? It would be pleasant to believe that such might be the case.

INDECISION

ANTHONY CRONIN

Anything at all, the weather or the telephone, the things that
provide you with chances,
Present also the unfortunate necessity of choices,
And it is very difficult then to discover the only one who
does not lie, the honestly selfish,
In the general noise and confusion of warning voices.

And you say to yourself if stillness were possible, if I could stop
The train I might make a proper decision;
But there is always the dreadful feeling of going inevitably
forward and having to make up your mind before
Time like the Underground carries you past the station.

And fear of course destroys all power of decision,
Panic expanding inside,
And afterwards we attribute the mistakes we make because of
it to those more picturesque vices to which we rather like
believing ourselves subject,
Such as laziness, impetuousity or pride.

And courage rarely comes simply as laugh or summer,
Waking on a clear morning and knowing that today,
But reluctantly and because at a certain point courage is easiest,
Though walking afterwards into the wind you wish that you hadn't
and could unsay.

Every day that knocks brings its need and demand for decision,
And not to have to decide is of course to have done that about
which we are sooner or later not allowed to decide:
Not to have any longer to face the telephone, the train or the
traffic,
Is to have died.

LAND REFORM IN ITALY

S. A. HUNTER

In his last budget President Truman appropriated seven and a half billion dollars for Europe, to be divided between military expenditure and domestic recovery agencies and proposed an extension of Marshall Aid beyond 1952. This budget message did much to relieve fears in the minds of Europeans that military security was to be achieved at the expense of domestic recovery. For a country like Italy with the most powerful Communist party this side the Iron Curtain economic stability is as important as military preparedness. And in particular the extension of Marshall Aid meant that Italy's best answer to Communism—the new land reform—was out of danger.

The Italian Parliament passed the laws setting up the reform programme in May 1950. In the opening discussions it seemed as if little could or would be done to improve on the old '*bonifiche*', Mussolini's modest and isolated land-reclamation schemes of the thirties. But in successive pieces of legislation, the Demo-Christians' programme developed an urgency and range that convinced, or at any rate discomfited, even the sceptical Left-Wing opposition. Although still in an experimental phase, the programme has already shown it can improve the entire economy.

The reform will eventually reach every region of Italy but for the moment it is being applied only to the critical areas in the deep south. A reclamation and land division scheme has been set up in the heart of the most stricken area—the *Sila* in the province of Calabria—and a fund for the south, the *Cassa del Mezzogiorno*, has been established. Of the thousand billion lira that the government proposes spending over the next ten years, a substantial part will be drawn from E.R.P. counterpart funds—two-thirds of the first year's expenditure and a comparable proportion as long as the Italian Government requires financing.

For Italy the expenditure is as colossal as it is urgent and belated. The south has gone begging through every political vicissitude of the past thirty years and its stock of faith in promises has almost expired. No internal problem has generated more public attention and less activity. Even Mussolini, who never let an opportunity slip for enhancing a quite unmerited reputation as a miracle worker, quailed before the magnitude of the chronic misery below Naples. More recently Carlo Levi attracted international attention to these forsaken and impoverished regions with his book *Christ Stopped at Eboli*. Centuries of misrule by every European dynasty from the Spanish viceroys to the Bourbons, brought this part of the world to the unenviable position of being the most depressed agricultural area in Europe, and since the war not only Communism but the neo-Fascist M.S.I. have flourished in its atmosphere of economic and political despair.

The rôle of national step-child had, in fact, become so familiar that it was not until the first land quotas were actually handed out in October in the Calabrian town of Santa Severina, that the southern peasant farmer could believe that the government was in earnest about its land reform. Overnight the Communist party line was changed. Against the concrete evidence that the government had expropriated some of the great private landholding of Calabria, the reform could no longer be dismissed as a fiction and there was nothing for the Communists to do but jump on to the bandwagon and claim the credit.

As it happened, the Demo-Christians probably moved only just in time and there was some justice in the Communist claim that they had provoked the land reform. The Communist farm co-operatives were, until the government agencies superceded them, the primary means the peasants had

for acquiring land and working it. A year earlier there had been an unfortunate incident in Melissa, a town near to Santa Severina. Three peasants were killed and a number wounded when the *carabinieri* were called in to suppress a series of quasi-legal land seizures. Occupation of uncultivated lands has been going on clandestinely since World War I in Calabria, and had even been authorised by law after this war. But at Melissa the local *commune* refused its authorisation and determined to enforce its refusal. Even if the land reform was timed partially as an answer to Communist agitation, its timing does not take away from the government's courage in undertaking the gargantuan task of reclaiming the south.

The problems of Calabria might have chilled the bravest hearts. Santa Severina, Melissa, Strongoli and other hill towns of the South have a deceptive beauty. They are invariably to be found poised like eagles' nests on a dramatic height commanding a sweeping view of either the glittering, ultramarine Ionian sea or the snow-capped uplands of the Sila. From a distance they are indistinguishable from a hundred other hill towns of provincial Italy, presenting the same mixture of distinction and squalor, of dignity and dreariness. But once inside the town walls, the impression of decay and misery is staggering.

From the port of Crotone twenty or thirty kilometres will bring you to these and even meaner outposts of hell, like San Leonardo, Cutro, Rocca di Neto or La Castella: villages which have only the remotest connection with modern civilisation. With populations from one to five thousand they are usually isolated by impassable roads, have no electricity, no cemetries or schoolhouses, and, only under fortunate circumstances, may share a doctor. The streets swarm with ragged children, rarely in shoes even on the bitterest winter day, and foraging pigs. The silent, grave faces might belong to survivors of some terrible natural visitation, which in fact was until recently true, owing to the ravages of malaria and typhoid Silence is the predominating impression, for hunger has deprived these people of their voice. Only in the ruins of Germany does the visitor feel closer to the damned. Santa Severina is a slight cut above the smaller villages, with its electricity and two or three cafés, but Castello, San Leonardo, and countless other primitive settlements like it are the source of Calabria's fifty per cent illiteracy and appallingly high childhood mortality. A system of land tenure that compelled the peasant farmer to walk or ride two hours each morning from his village to the fields exaggerated the anarchic political and economic possibilities of the situation.

Into this morbid atmosphere the *Opera Sila* (the government agency administering the scheme) has introduced a new note of professional certainty and action. The dozing village of Santa Severina has already been transformed, for example, into a scene of strenuous activity, as the first experimental station. In October four hundred families were given plots of land that had been expropriated from the district's extensive, unused *latifondi*—a term that describes the large private landholdings, usually only partially under cultivation, that are characteristic of the southern agriculture. By late autumn the scheme was well under way.

The change has been remarkable. The vacant region has already begun to bristle with newly constructed agricultural centres and modern agricultural equipment. On the hills of Santa Severina and in areas like the fertile Neto valley just beyond Crotone, thousands of new acres of land have been cleared, put in order, sown and are now swarming with *contadini* engaged in constructing irrigation canals, and terracing and fertilizing the soil—a mass labour force that otherwise would have formed an army of unemployed in this out-of-season period. As one of the agriculture inspectors pointed out, work is the best-known antidote to Communism, or, for that matter, to any of the other mistaken salvation schemes the disinherited south may turn to in desperation.

The fifteen billion lira (about nine million pounds) designated for the Sila region over a period of six years may seem a modest sum. But this in a sense is a token fund for the first phase of the reclamation

experiment, and behind it is the reserve fund, the *Cassa del Mezzogiorno*, with its substantial E.R.P. support of another thousand billion lira which will be thrown in as the programme develops. The initial provision for the Sila may be expected to give land to a population of 360,000, and the entire rehabilitation scheme is probably the most ambitious in progress today.

By the law of May 1950, the Sila scheme involves a rectangle of land a hundred kilometres deep and fifty across, carved out of the instep of Italy's boot, with Sibari and Catanzaro as its northern and southern extremities. By November, expropriation of all properties in this region exceeding 300 hectares (a hectare is roughly two and a half acres) had been completed, their owners given certificates of payment, and in Santa Saverina, Cutro and a few other stations, the assignment of small farms to the *contadini* had begun. By the end of this spring all the new quotas had been made with 76,000 hectares expropriated and given over to the *contadini*. Only land of a *latifondi* character has been touched by the government, land, that is, that had not been improved by the investment of private capital. The extent to which the land of Calabria had been left idle is shown by the fact that in addition to the 76,000 hectares which the government found capable of improvement, 25,000 hectares had already been absorbed in clandestine expropriations since the war—out of a territory that, although it totals more than 500,000 hectares is by more than half a wooded mountain region, unsuitable for purposes of agriculture.

In a region where only one quarter of the population engaged in agricultural activity are independent landholders, and where a glorified form of share-cropping has been the usual form of tenure, the aim of the *Opera Sila* is to create a new, autonomous class of small proprietors. With a long tradition of hand-to-mouth and old-fashioned agricultural methods and a deep habit of subordination, the southern *contadino* is not immediately adapted to independence, and for the moment he is being sternly supervised even where he has been given land outright. For six years his rôle will be that of a kind of apprentice owner who has transferred his allegiance to the benevolent patronage of the government. Over this period he will be educated to the level of the northern *mezzadro*—the peasant farmer who is financed by his landlord, shares half his produce income, but who lives on the land, and has both a nominal possession of it as well as considerable knowledge of its problems. In the *Sila*, farm dwellings are already in construction on the land, which should do much to alter the rootless, migratory mentality of the *braccianti* of the south. In the meantime the Calabrian peasant's proprietorship is on trial for a three year period, and can be revoked where he shows himself incapable or unwilling to act as a responsible landholder. In this way the *Sila* programme means to profit from the earlier experience of reclamation projects, where farmers abandoned government sponsored agricultural colonies when more lucrative work could be found elsewhere. The government, too, for the first time has committed itself to sustained financial and mecanical support of the small farmer.

The problem is of course complicated by the scarcity of land in relation to the population, and a good many of the government's reservations about proprietorship are purely rhetorical. Calabria's exuberant birth-rate has necessarily imposed strict limits to the size of the holdings. In Santa Severina the average holding of three to four hectares is scarcely enough to sustain a family, and compares very unfavourably with the farms in the north of Italy. In the circumstances no other solution was available, barring extensive emigration or expropriation of going agricultural establishments; critics of this policy of dividing the land forget that the government is proceeding empirically, adapting its programme to the local situation. In other areas the holdings may be larger. In any case the six year programme of public works and reclamation activity may be expected to provide full employment and close the critical gap which, in the beginning, the incomes from these small properties alone cannot do. At the end of six years, productivity of

the land will, it is hoped, have been sufficiently increased by the improvement schemes to support families even on these minute holdings.

It must be understood that by comparison with the past even the smallholdings of three hectares, with the prospect of full employment the year round, is a striking advance. Previously the southern farmer could not count on much beyond his classic 'hundred days' of seasonal labour, and was eternally confronted with the prospect of sub-subsistence living. The government's distribution of the lands on a strictly egalitarian basis has guaranteed survival to all: the provision of full employment in public works at daily rates from 500 to 1000 lira, as compared with the 350 lira private landholders invariably paid, will add some small margin of comfort and security. In the meantime the land improvement programme may be expected to give the peasant, at the end of ten years, a property of considerable value.

For the cost of his property the *contadino* is responsible—at rates well below market price—as well as for 40 per cent of the government expenses of improving it. Irrigation, roads and anything else that comes under the heading of general public works are financed by the government. The estimated 150,000 lira that will be invested per hectare, can be paid at a modest interest rate over a period of thirty years. Altogether it is estimated that the annual sum the *contadino* is responsible for will be less than the rent he customarily paid.

Again, the insistence on making the small and impecunious *contadino* responsible for even such reduced payments may seem puzzling in a public-service activity of such scope. But the Demo-Christians insist on the spirit and letter of small proprietorship, even though, as is likely in application, the scattered agricultural agencies will have to pool their resources for efficiency's sake and operate on some sort of basis of collective cultivation. In any case, to the Demo-Christian mind, a concomitant of holding a stake in the national agriculture, even a token stake is financial responsibility, even where it is a token responsibility. None of this, however, has prevented the southern *contadino* from realising a fundamental gain, and it is not unreasonable to suppose that eventually he may approximate the relatively healthy and equitable—even by our standards—agricultural condition of Northern and Central Italy.

That his stake in the national agriculture has been withheld for so many years may seem incredible, but is consistent with the anachronistic and feudal character of the south. The recent impressive growth of Communist power in the south, in an area that had always been dependably Conservative, is not altogether surprising and has had a rather sinister parallel in the agrarian economies of Russia and China. A large share of the responsibility for the success of the Communists in Calabria, and even for their existence must lie on the *latifondisti*. These landholders have generally refused to exploit their own vast properties or release them to those who would and have instead converted them to pastures or, as the Communists never weary of pointing out, allowed vast hunting preserves to stand on them.

The *latifondi*, much more than the agricultural reform itself, have captured the international imagination. Only in pre-war Poland or Spain did such spectacular extensive private estates, and social anachronism, survive. Unfortunately, the south of Italy inherited the evils with none of the virtues of these ancient feudal properties, for the landholders were absentees, never on the scene either to conduct their properties or guarantee the peasant his basic securities. In a country where every inch of land is precious, there has been a stubborn pact to keep great portions of it out of circulation. The *latifondisti* preferred a nominal cultivation of the richest areas of their extensive properties to large-scale agricultural investment, with its risks and long period of trial. That this policy did not prevent the landholders from enjoying considerable prosperity—their policy of financial caution has been blamed on impoverishment—is indicated by the figures of the last *Catasto Agrario*, the agricultural index of 1938. The concentration and extent of

holdings in the province of Catanzaro, for example, would impress even an American rancher of the far west. Here an estimated half of the land belongs to some thirty odd proprietors, with five accounting for a quarter of the total. Among these are the two largest landholdings in Italy, with about 10,000 and 12,000 hectares each. According to the old *Catasto* these holdings provided incomes of over £80,000 a year. It is only fair to add that much of the land in the south is marginal land in any case and the expropriated territory of Calabria is probably more suitable to public rather than private enterprise. But this takes nothing away from the deadly do-nothing psychology of the *latifondisti*. Their resistance to either small proprietorship or the encroachment of northern industry, which in many cases have had to rely on government intervention to get a foothold in the south, is summed up in an old Calabrian adage, *Chi vende, scende*. Whoever sells, descends, and so the *latifondisti* have resisted any innovation and jealously guarded their hoard of land.

The signal for the dissolution of the *latifondi* has aroused considerable mixed feeling in Rome, of surprise that such an institution still survived and nostalgia, as if a rather exotic and nearly extinct species were finally passing. Otherwise, except for intermittent explosions in the Press or the discussions of specialists, the *Sila* programme gets relatively little attention. The south has been considered a lost cause for so long that there is an almost unconscious conspiracy of silence concerning it. Popular criticism when it makes itself heard is usually content to accuse the government of political opportunism. Indeed, the suggestion that the government is interested in alienating the southern *contadini* from the Communists is more pertinent than these critics may imagine. Thus far, the *Legge Stralcio*, which is the enabling law for the entire reform and also touches on northern and central agricultural areas has been much more controversial than the *Sila* provision, even though it has not yet been put to a serious test of application.

The absence of detailed criticism of the reform and the silence about the *Sila* are discouraging. Behind this phenomenon is an alarming general incredulity about short-term solutions for Italy's overwhelming economic problems. This spirit, which in the end is tantamount to relinquishing the game to the extremists with their grandiose salvation schemes, can be found in the most unexpected quarters. Even the distinguished historian, Gaetano Salvemini, who taught many years at Harvard as a political ex-patriate and is an authority on the south, commits the liberal's primary sin of ignoring modest present gains for exalted ends, and is deeply discouraged about the south. He believes that the present experiment will only redistribute the misery of the south. And in characteristic fashion the argument runs on to a citation of Italy's annual birth-rate of 500,000—appalling for a country with one third the population of America —her army of 2,000,000 unemployed and non-existent emigration possibilities.

These discussions admit no solution. Birth-control implies a militant campaign of anti-clericalism, which even the Communists realise means political suicide. And large-scale emigration is equally delicate internationally, however great its urgency. These fundamental problems will have to be faced some time. To stake everything on solving them finally and at this moment is wrong-headed, and encourages the extremists who are always prepared to discredit short-term compromise and realism. It is ironic but none the less impressive that the one party without a long-term programme for Italy has alone been able to commit itself to the initial solution of her most pressing agricultural problems. And if the agricultural legislation is any example, apparently even a government of moderates can convert anti-Communism into a creative principle and under its aegis both consolidate its political ground and pursue a decisive programme of constructive reform.

AN EPISODE IN PHILOSOPHY

STUART HAMPSHIRE

SOMEONE, not himself a philosopher, might say in the course of conversation: 'After all, in deciding what ought to be done in any particular situation, one need never consider anything other than the feelings and states of mind of human beings: physical things enter into moral questions only in so far as they are somehow related to the feelings and state of mind of people.' Such a remark would be very easily understood; probably many people would immediately accept it as clearly right, and perhaps even claim that it is obvious and undeniable. Some people might perhaps argue that one ought also to consider the effects of one's actions upon the feelings of animals; but this objection would show that they had clearly understood the original remark, and that they at least agreed that moral questions are typically questions of the effects of conduct upon feelings. There would be serious disagreement only if someone said that the arrangement or condition of inanimate objects might be a relevant factor to consider in a moral argument, apart altogether from the probable effect of the objects on human feelings and apart from their interest as expressions of feelings or states of minds. A general moral discussion of this kind might proceed so far without the use of any technical term of philosophy and without reference to any philosophical theory. 'Only human feelings and state of mind matter; in the last resort everything else must be judged good or bad solely as it affects these': such a statement might be described as philosophical, simply because it is unusually general and sweeping; but it is the kind of moral pronouncement which might suggest itself at any time to anyone who happened to be in a reflecting mood. If it is philosophy, it is philosophy of the kind which develops naturally out of ordinary conversation and reflection.

In 1903 Professor G. E. Moore of Cambridge published *Principia Ethica*, a philosophical work which was immediately recognised as important and which has retained its influence among philosophers until the present day; it is probably the most lasting contribution to moral philosophy which has been written in English in this century; it may be seen as having largely replaced J. S. Mill's more crude Utilitarianism as the philosophical starting-point of liberal thought. The book can be naturally divided into two parts, the first of which is very precisely critical of previous theories, and particularly of Utilitarianism, and the second of which is highly speculative. In the later speculative chapters direct and positive assertions are made to the effect that certain kinds of situation are good and certain kinds of situation are bad, and these assertions are supported by arguments. The proposition which I quoted in the first paragraph is typical of the kind of assertion which Moore considered worth discussing in his book; he himself implicitly rejected this assertion, because (among other reasons) he decided that the beauty of natural objects is something good in itself, irrespective of its possible effects on human minds; it seemed to him clear that the world becomes worse if it becomes uglier, whether or not the ugliness is noticed and felt by human beings. This conclusion is as intelligible as that which it contradicts is intelligible; one immediately sees what is meant, even if it is difficult to see how the issue can be settled. It is an issue of the kind which has been informally discussed, sometimes under the title of 'Philosophy', for many hundreds of years, and no special logical equipment seems to be necessary in order to decide in favour of one side or the other; it is a case in which one must simply reflect, understand the

various implications of the two views, and then make up one's mind for oneself. After removing some verbal confusions which might obscure the issue, Moore himself actually did no more than this; he simply *asserted* his own view.

English philosophy in 1951 is largely distinguished from English philosophy in 1903 by the fact that such direct and sweeping assertions on moral issues are no longer generally to be found side by side with logical criticism within a single book of the kind which is labelled 'Philosophy'; such assertions may of course occur in general literature and conversation, but most English philosophers no longer classify them as 'Philosophy'. It is only the first part of *Principia Ethica*, the critical and analytical chapters, which are still actively discussed by philosophers; the later speculative chapters on 'The Ideal' have largely fallen into neglect. The word 'Philosophy' has in the interval been annexed to the disentangling of verbal and logical confusion, and the first part of Moore's book was an early example of the method. The justification of this separation of subject matter is that no one should be given the impression that assertions of the form 'Only human feelings and states of mind are in the last resort practically important' are anything more than assertions, which may be more or less seriously thought out; a reader of *Principia Ethica* may have the impression that Moore's typical assertion that human affection and aesthetic enjoyment are intrinsically good is an assertion which Moore had *proved*, that is, which he had shown to be true by purely logical argument; the form of his book might suggest that he had first shown that previous moral theories were logically confused, and that, by eliminating alternative theories as confused or contradictory, he had arrived at positive and definite conclusions, which no clear-thinking person could resist. Certainly some of Moore's early readers were convinced that strict logic and attention to the proper meanings of words must lead any unprejudiced person to Moore's general conclusions; the conclusions, therefore, seemed to be something more than an assertion of his own moral convictions. Many philosophers in 1951 would argue that this impression of a logical deduction of a moral doctrine must always be misleading, and that no positive conclusions about what is intrinsically good can ever emerge from drawing distinctions of logic or from considering the meanings of words; and it is for this reason that they would wish to keep philosophy separate from general discussions of moral doctrine, in so far as philosophy is also identified with logic.

But there have been developments in philosophy between 1903 and 1951 which are directly relevant both to Moore's discussion of 'The Ideal' and to my original proposition about feelings; in fact they are relevant to any statement of a liberal morality of this kind. Philosophers have recently suggested metaphysical and logical doubts about the nature of human feelings and human personality and about the limits of our knowledge of them; these doubts, at least in their modern and acute form, were unknown in 1903. Moore, in common with almost all previous philosophers and most non-philosophers, simply assumed that human feelings and states of mind—of affection, of aesthetic enjoyment, of anger, of disappointment—can in principle be identified and named, very much as ordinary physical things are identified and named; they occur and are discriminated in our experience, and some we consider good and some bad; the problem of conduct is to judge how states of mind considered bad can be avoided and how states of mind considered good can be brought into existence. Such a doctrine clearly requires that we should be able freely to communicate and to discuss our feelings with others, and that we should be more or less confident in attaching labels to them; and we must be certain that we attach the same meaning to the same labels. Moore's disciples, in Cambridge and elsewhere, did try, in literature and in private conversation, to communicate their feelings and states of mind to each other with a new seriousness; their manner of doing this was gently derided by Keynes in his posthumously published memoir, *My Early Beliefs*. But the careful dissections of states of mind and the comparative neglect of material conditions, which were characteristic of Moore's followers, were far from frivolous; if states of mind are

all-important, and human behaviour in the external world is significant only as producing valuable states of mind, accuracy in description of these states must be all-important also. The full tide of this new seriousness in the communication of feelings and of states of mind flowed out into the later novels of Virginia Woolf; in these novels the characters struggle to communicate the incommunicable experiences of their inner life and the external world of action is largely dissolved. Much of the tension and tragedy of her novels lies in the characters' awareness, not only of the evanescence of their feelings and inner experience, but also of their powerlessness to communicate them. This incommunicability of feeling, when utterly separated from behaviour, is also the modern philosopher's doubt, arising now from considerations of logic and theory of knowledge. How can we ever know what another man feels, except as feeling is manifested in speech and behaviour? How can we ever describe to another the quality of our inner feelings and states of mind, where 'inner' makes the contrast with manifest feeling? If we reflect upon our actual descriptions of feelings and states of mind, we realise that these are never pure descriptions of inner feelings, but always refer in part to the pattern of overt behaviour in which the feelings are, or could be, manifested; to be affectionate, to be angry, to be disappointed—each of these descriptions ordinarily refers to a familiar pattern of behaviour occurring in familiar circumstances. The more we reflect on the vocabulary which we use to describe feelings and states of mind, the more evident it seems that we *must* learn to use it by associating certain patterns of behaviour with certain descriptions; it seems evident that we cannot be claiming some insight into the inner experience of others whenever we confidently describe them as, for instance, angry; for we are satisfied that they are angry if they consistently react in the required ways in the required situations. When we reflect further, it seems a *general* condition of communication that our words should be tied to demonstrable features of the common external world, and not to private experience.

This argument has been followed to its extreme conclusion by some contemporary philosophers, whose interest has been to show how communication in language must generally work. But, like most general theories of language, it has wider implications, particularly for moral arguments, and these implications have not been generally acknowledged. When we consider human feelings in the course of moral arguments, and decide that a particular action would be right or wrong because of its effect upon someone's feelings, 'feeling' seems here to refer to the unshared inner experience of the person affected; it is not the overt and visible behaviour or condition, but the quality of feeling which lies behind them, which interests us when we are judging of the effects of our actions on other people. If we are wondering whether we have done good or harm, we are interested in the symptoms of happiness or unhappiness in the persons affected only as evidence of something else, namely, of the nature of their feelings. What in the last analysis is good or bad is that human beings, as the result of our treatment of them, should be experiencing certain feelings, feelings which may or may not be of the kind to be disclosed in speech or in behaviour. There are a hundred or more effects of being unhappy or in love, and it is always the particular feelings of the particular person concerned which matter to us. We may be satisfied that a victim of our behaviour shows all the ordinary signs of elation, misery, or boredom, and we may, therefore, be satisfied he may be properly described as elated, miserable or bored; but even when we are so far satisfied that a conventional description applies, we still need to satisfy ourselves that the victim is actually feeling as a man so described ordinarily feels, or that he feels as we should feel when showing similar symptoms; how are we to know and how is he to tell us? He may himself entertain the general doubt whether he ever feels as other men feel when they are elated, miserable or bored: perhaps he never suffers as they suffer, and never enjoys as they enjoy; perhaps the temperature and intensity of his inner experience is consistently lower or higher than theirs. If this were true,

it seems evident that our moral responsibilities in respect of him would be proportionately less or proportionately greater; with a man of lesser sensibility less is at stake, and treatment of him might be relatively harmless which would not be harmless in another case. 'The sufferings of primitive people, when they are miserable, are less than the sufferings of civilised people when they are miserable: of course primitive people are often unhappy but they are used to unhappiness, and do not feel it as much as a European would'—this is an assertion sometimes made, and practical consequences seem to follow from it; it is not irrelevant in political argument, if to weigh the good and bad consequences of a policy is to weigh the effects of the policy on human feelings. We would not feel guilty about the signs of misery in the victims of policy unless we believed that they actually felt correspondingly, that is, roughly as we would feel under these conditions; we need to *imagine* their feelings. Yet when we say that they are miserable, we can only be certain that they behave in the way which we have learnt to associate with misery, unless, through some imaginative use of language, we acquire some further sympathetic insight. We seem to have no answer to make if a general doubt is raised whether the victims actually feel, 'inside', as strongly as we have assumed that they feel. They cannot simply inform us outright, even if they are utterly honest and accurate; for we can never know what weight to attach to such words as 'misery' and 'happiness' in terms of their feelings, but only in terms of our own: they may tell us that something affected them intensely or mildly, and we may therefore know that one circumstance affected them more than another; but how intense is 'intense' to them? How can such inter-personal comparisons ever be made? This is the new philosopher's challenge, unknown to earlier moralists; yet rational decision and design of policy seemed always to involve making just such inter-personal comparisons.

This seems a challenge to any humanistic morality, which does not appeal to supernatural commands or social conventions. Moore, like Bentham and Mill before him, had tried to pass behind rules and conventions of conduct in order to find the ultimate justifications ('The Ideal') upon which they rest; this was his strength and influence as a moralist, as it had been the strength of the Utilitarians whom he replaced; it seemed evident in 1903 that rational men should first reflect and decide what is absolutely good in itself and 'ought to exist', and then set themselves to act in such a way as to make the ideal real as far as it is possible. But this is too simple a programme if it is true, as some philosophers now suggest, that language provides no means of describing the nature and quality of the inner experience and feelings of people, except in relation to their external behaviour. Moore's doctrine of intrinsically good states of mind seems essentially an immaterialist or spiritualist doctrine, depending on an unquestioned contrast between the physical states of physical things and states of mind, which (with one exception) are essential ingredients in any situation which is intrinsically good. It is this natural common-sense dualism, which involves a contrast between the external world of behaviour and the inner world of feeling, which has been brilliantly questioned by Gilbert Ryle in his book *The Concept of Mind*, for the reasons which I have very roughly indicated; he argues that the dualism is a mistake, since in justifying our description of states of mind we necessarily refer to external behaviour and circumstance; it is therefore an illusion that we ever talk or learn of inner, inaccessible feelings and states of mind, or of an invisible stream of consciousness.

The legitimacy of this dualism is of course an old issue in philosophy, and it has always been as much an issue of moral philosophy as of metaphysics; for any form of behaviourism or materialism, however carefully qualified and restricted, has always seemed to make moral choices and moral attitudes unintelligible. If all that we can learn about people can be conveyed in descriptions of their acts and words and performances, it must be these acts and words and performances themselves which we call good or bad, if anything is to be called good or bad; it would seem to follow that some actions and

patterns of behaviour must be good in themselves and ends in themselves, simply as being particular kinds of action and behaviour, apart altogether from their effects outside the sphere of action and performance. The kind of behaviour called kindness must be intrinsically better than the kind of behaviour called cruelty, simply as being the kind of behaviour it is and as producing the overt reactions which it does produce; we cannot appeal to any intrinsically good or bad effects of action upon people, unless these effects are of the kind to be manifested in behaviour or speech; for (philosophers suggest) this would only be to appeal to a nonentity, something unknowable and indescribable. On this view no account is given, by reference to anything external to the activities themselves, of why one activity is better than another; this seems to me an unintelligible conclusion. It seems to me (and this is pure assertion) that some part of Moore's conception of The Ideal must be right and must be defended.

To recur to the original proposition: 'Only the feelings and states of mind of human beings are in the last resort good or bad in themselves: every moral decision must ultimately be justified by reference to these.' Of any ordinary description of a state of mind—for instance the state described as 'aesthetic enjoyment', to which Moore attached the highest value—let it be admitted that the description refers, at least in part, to the external and perceptible condition and circumstances of the person to whom it is applied, and not entirely to the quality of some inner feeling; but when anyone finds himself in the situation in which he can truly say 'This is aesthetic enjoyment', he will have certain feelings, although these may differ on different occasions of aesthetic enjoyment; and he will take these feelings, his inner experience in that situation, as some confirmation or otherwise of Moore's assertion of the intrinsic goodness of the state; when he is in the situation of feeling personal affection—Moore's other case of an intrinsically good state of mind—what he feels will seem to him either to support or to undermine Moore's assertion that it is an intrinsically good state. The same person may have different feelings on different occasions while being in a state of aesthetic enjoyment; and, more obviously, different people may have very different experiences or feelings while in this state; but, whatever they feel, it is their own particular feelings or experiences which will in the end convince them that it is, or that it is not, an intrinsically valuable state. Having discovered in their own experience —and this is the only possible method of discovery — that aesthetic enjoyment is an intrinsically good state, they will tend to assume by analogy that others will make the same discovery in their experience. Whether a particular state of mind is or is not intrinsically good must be a matter for each individual to decide for himself on the basis of his personal experience and feeling, when weighed against the testimony of others. It is this feeling and inner experience on which we rely, if, like Moore, we decide that personal affection or aesthetic enjoyment are generally good in themselves, and that, therefore, they are states of mind which ought to be brought into existence whenever possible. There exists, in fact, a rough consensus of humanity, based on experience in this sense (i.e. inner experience or feeling), as to what states of mind are in general intrinsically good; and general policies of action are held to be right in so far as they are designed to bring into existence those states of mind which are generally accepted, on the basis of direct experience, to be intrinsically good, and to avoid those which are generally found in experience to be intrinsically bad. But only the actual feelings of actual people, while enjoying these privileged states of mind, are of any moral concern in any particular situation in private life; we only fall back on generalities about good states of mind when, as in political decision, it is impossible to make individual inquiries into the experience of particular people. We cannot decide in general, and in abstraction from the particular experiences of particular people, that aesthetic enjoyment is better than sensual enjoyment, just because it is the kind of state it is; the mere words and general labels do not signify and cannot instruct us; one needs to have felt what is involved in these states oneself, and, on occasions of action, try to imagine the

particular feelings of the particular people involved.

It is for this reason (I think) that Moore's philosophical discussion of 'The Ideal', in spite of its influence and importance, now seems misplaced in method, just because it was a purely philosophical and abstract discussion. The implication of such an inquiry, an echo of Plato, was that a philosopher, by thinking (Moore's word was 'reflecting'), can decide that certain states of mind are good and that others are bad; but the philosopher's 'reflection' can amount to no more than the recall of his own experience and feeling. His good reason for saying that physical pain is, as such, bad will be the memory of his own experiences when in pain, and no manipulation of abstract terms will produce any better reason. *A priori* reasoning about what is good and bad is as helpless as *a priori* reasoning about nature, and ethics which claims any final authority other than feeling and direct experience is as deceiving as a science which claims any authority other than observation. In any situation in which a decision involving the feelings of others is required, abstract propositions to the effect that certain states of mind are good and others bad have only the authority of direct experience, and of the accumulated records of such experience. The problem of someone acting in any situation is not whether a certain general description properly applies to this particular case; the problem is what a particular person is likely to feel in this situation.

This episode of philosophical doubt about conventional descriptions of states of mind has evident parallels in the imaginative writing of today; it is part of the general climate of opinion, which makes it so difficult to tolerate earlier more simple conceptions of personality and therefore, to the moral doctrines which went with these conceptions; it has been the philosophers' contribution to show why the varieties of inner experience cannot be catalogued in our vocabulary and why ordinary psychological descriptions must be tied to the common features of external behaviour and circumstance. The simple conception that states of mind and feelings can be definitely labelled, as colours are definitely labelled, has disappeared, not only from philosophy, but also from literature and conversation; we recognise that we may often know very well how to classify the state of mind of another—'He is in love' or 'He is unhappy'—but still not know, or be able to imagine, his actual feelings. We recognise that we need somehow to reconstruct his inner experience in our imagination, before we can say anything about the goodness or badness of his state of mind. It is now almost a common-place that, without the accident of common experience and similar temperament, or without an exceptional literary gift, it may be impossible to communicate in words what one feels to another; and if we cannot communicate in words, it is impossible to *point* to feelings as it is possible to point to physical things; this is the helplessness of the situation. It follows that there is no practical substitute for direct experience and imaginative insight, if moral decisions always and necessarily involve a speculation on the feelings of others; Moore's abstract and very general propositions about the goodness and badness of typical states of mind can only represent rough summaries of the lessons of direct experience in countless particular cases. Moore, like the nineteenth-century moralists whom he replaced, left the impression that there were universal self-evident truths, which, once intellectually grasped, would determine the ends of action: the states of affairs good in themselves, which 'ought to be brought into existence'. Moore's *Principia Ethica* of 1903 stands therefore at a dividing point in philosophy; it opens a new episode and closes an old one; its critical and analytical chapters were the first outstanding example of philosophical analysis of the meanings of words in the modern manner; but its speculative chapters belong to the climate of the preceding age, the age of John Stuart Mill and Henry Sidgwick, in which it seemed a philosopher's work, simply by arguing and reflecting on the meaning of words, to determine the ends of action. This claim is no longer plausibly made; but the analysis of the conditions of communication, which has become so large a part of philosophy in the period since 1903, has carried

implications which are important for moral arguments, and particularly important for the kind of liberal morality which Moore suggested, and which many still wish to defend. If one is concerned with people at all, one must be concerned with the variety and recessiveness of human feeling, and with the allowance which must be made for this variety in distrust of common labels and of the conclusions drawn from them. In seventeenth- and eighteenth-century philosophy, and correspondingly in the literature of the period, a person's experience could be conceived as a succession of simple, nameable mental states; the moralist could write of pleasure and pain as definite and easily identifiable entities, the one necessarily good and the other necessarily bad. But now in philosophy, as in imaginative literature, the simple labels of states of minds are seen as no more than rough conveniences of discourse at a level where the coarse average of normal human reaction must be assumed without individual inquiry. But in private life the difficulties of decision, and of judgments of good and bad, are inseparably connected with the difficulties of reconstructing and imagining the feelings of others; it can almost be said that this problem of the limits of communication, and of the imaginative uses of language which make sympathy and insight into the feelings of others possible, must stand in the front of all moral questions. The discussion of our knowledge of feelings and states of mind, which first broke out in 1903 among adherents of Moore's moral doctrines, later became a central issue of analytical philosophy, divorced from moral doctrine; but the wheel will come full circle, because the relevance of the problem of communication to any liberal or humanist morality cannot be avoided. The defence of individual variety has always been the meaning of 'liberalism'; but, as Mill himself virtually admitted in his *Autobiography*, the fact of this variety of human experience had never been allowed for in liberal theory, precisely because there was a theory.

One can start again, without theory and with distrust of ordinary labels, by exploring the imaginative uses of language which may give some insight into the infinitely varied feelings of others.

CHISWICK HOUSE

JOHN BAYLISS

For her the white acacias and the stars,
the flowers of night and silence, the dark grass
that carries coloured snails and water crystals
along its green and moving galleries;
for her the white and red camellias,
the blue and mauve of early hot-house flowers
where sunlight glistens and where water drenches
the close intensity of their green towers.

For her this house, its formal stair and lawns
that lie beneath great cedars by the lake,
leaf-laden pools and slow returning swans,
all properties that Time has carried back.
—That Time has carried, and can take away
as swiftly as it takes her love from me.

THE NOVELS OF WILLIAM GODWIN

ANGUS WILSON

THE increasing pressure of governmental power in every guise—left, right and centre—has reawakened interest in the theories of political anarchism. William Godwin, who, in the last eighty or so years, in England at any rate, had been remembered largely as the spongeing father-in-law of Shelley, has been the subject of two biographical studies in the post-war period. His principal work, *Political Justice*, so influential in its own day, has been once more re-estimated and found, despite its occasional absurd dogmatism and its quaint air of pedantry applied to life, to be a valuable statement of the fundamental liberties which humanity must always protect against the drive for increased power that inevitably lies beneath the claims of rulers of whatever political shade. Godwin's belief in human perfectibility, his conception of individual benevolence as universally latent, and only requiring suitable education to be universally active, must appear psychologically naïve to Stalinist, Catholic and Freudian humanist alike, for all those, in fact, to whom the conception of original sin or of an elect are dogmas. Nevertheless, so much has been seen and felt of the tyrannies which emphasis on man's guilt and corruption are made to justify, that an assertion of his innate goodness and powers of love, with the consequent demand for his full freedom to express them, rouses a responsive welcome in a bewildered generation, increasingly impatient of the claims of its rulers to restrain and control it for its own good.

The fresh examination of Godwin's views has not, of course, removed the naïveté that hangs around his perfectionism, but it has shown that *Political Justice* made advances in the understanding of social organisation which freed political theory from abstractions that had cumbered the work of far more notable and respected writers like Rousseau and Hobbes. It is not the purpose of this article to investigate the political theory of Godwin, but for those who have not read the recent biographies, it seems necessary to illustrate one aspect of his originality, if only to establish his claim to consideration as an individual rather than as a quaintly disagreeable appendage to the life of Shelley. No aspect of *Political Justice* is, perhaps, more remarkable than his renunciation of the idea of a 'social contract'—historical or purely abstract—which formed so important a part of the work of Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau. With the dismissal of this idea of a binding contract between individuals and society went the greatest claims of states to a special consideration as institutions with sanction beyond the satisfactions of the individuals composing them. This break with the traditional approach to political theory is alone sufficient to justify Godwin's restoration to the hierarchy of political philosophers.

His recent biographers have also shown that, if the particular turn of events in English society during Godwin's own lifetime and the whole subsequent development of Victorian society drove Godwin's reputation first into detestation and then into oblivion, his work was by no means so completely forgotten abroad. Anarchism as a serious political theory only finally gave way to Marxism in the great continental Socialist controversies at the end of the nineteenth century, and, among the devoted adherents of Bakunin and Kropotkin, Godwin's work was remembered and respected.

It is not, then, perhaps, so surprising that the only work in the catalogue of the British Museum Library which is devoted solely to Godwin's novels should be a doctorate thesis presented to the University of Leipzig in 1904. Even his recent English biographers have not felt justified in

according much notice to Godwin's fiction, apart from his first novel *Things as they are; or, Caleb Williams*. The literary merit of these novels is not, they suggest, very high, the contents of small interest. In the first assertion, they are, I think, only partially justified, in the second curiously short-sighted. It is, I believe, the conflicts and themes of the novels, their remarkable, if obsessionist, psychological insight, and their strange moral ambivalence that fill in the gaps in Godwin's political views, that refute the charge of naïveté, and reveal him not only as a courageous opponent of the cruelties and injustices that scarred the surface of eighteenth-century order and decency, but also as a man peculiarly sensitive to the spiritual terrors and despairs that lay beneath its intellectual composure and certainty. In this, his novels reveal him as an exceptional portrayer through symbols of the hideous ennui, gloom and tragedy that Shenstone, Cowper and Samuel Johnson fought to restrain in their inmost private padded cells. It is notable, perhaps, that in these same novels may be seen the symbolic expression of that obsessive hatred of authority—father, State or God—that found full outlet in *The Revolt of Islam*, *The Cenci* and *Promotheus Unbound*. For Godwin, I suspect, from the earliest days of his Calvinist childhood, the lack of intimacy, of love, of warmth in life, were a spiritual agony which an adolescence of concentrated study could not banish. The authority of his minister-father, of the decrees of Calvin's elect was the hated source of this agony, this vacuum of the affections. In *Political Justice* (1793) he sought to express his positive belief in the loving goodness of men, his negative refusal to accept the family as its means of expression. In *Things as they are; or, Caleb Williams* (1794) he declared his ceaseless fight against the dark authority that had refused him the love he had needed, and against the society that supported that authority. For the few short years that followed the success of these books, Godwin found happiness in the affection of a circle of friends and the crown of happiness in his marriage to Mary Wollstonecraft. Then came disaster: Mary's death, obloquy and persecution in the years of reaction that marked the end of the eighteenth century in England, and finally neglect and a crippling, chronic penury and debt. Successively in *St. Leon* (1799), *Fleetwood* (1805), *Mandeville* (1817) and more pathetically and feebly in *Cloudesley* (1830), and *Deloraine* (1833), the fear, the sense of persecution, and the despair reassert themselves, and the belief, or more truly the need to believe in man's goodness, is courageously but ever more ineffectually reaffirmed, just as, despite all the growing financial misery, quarrels and suspicions of his private life, he always attempted to maintain a moderate, happy life of social intercourse and simple pleasure until he faded out, a forgotten, patronised figure, at the age of eighty in 1836.

The peculiar psychological and social comprehension of Godwin's novels has been asserted; it must now be said that as works of art they are all, in some degree, failures—three, at least, completely so. Excuses and explanations for Godwin's failure as a novelist can be offered: *Caleb Williams* is by far the most successful work, and it alone was written before external circumstances made writing a fight against time and debt and family warfare. Much of the failure of *St. Leon*, *Fleetwood*, and *Mandeville* may be accounted for by the pressure of miserable hackwork; the total collapse of *Cloudesley* and *Deloraine* may be charged to old age and spent forces. The fact remains, however, that Godwin's powers as a novelist were very limited; that, with every excuse made for difficult circumstances, he never developed them, and that this artistic limitation makes even the best, the most original of his novels, at times unendurable, and renders the weaker, the less original, worthless.

That any writer of such intellectual distinction, whose style and powers were so ill adapted to this medium, should have chosen to express himself in it, must seem curious. The choice is only partly, I think, explained by the growing popularity of the novel, and the large financial returns, which he always hoped for, but never succeeded in securing, to relieve his load of debts. The deeper reason lies in the nature of the material which he put into his novels. The guilt, the horror and the tragedy of

the eighteenth century lay in the hinterland of the minds of its sensitive men. For many—politicians and men of affairs, even some artists—it was so well repressed, so covered over by hard work and harder play that it could only emerge in periodic madness which no formal social life, no tea with Mrs. Unwin or Mrs. Thrale, no midnight sessions in the House, or early morning gambling or debauch, could heal. Godwin found his relief in the symbolism of the novel. In all the charges against his private or public virtue that his opponents threw at him, we find no charge against his sanity. For this, perhaps, he had his imperfect novels to thank.

Had he lived half a century later, Godwin might well have given utterance to his emotions in a form that would have been adequate to its content, for by that time the creative genius of Dickens had transformed the old picaresque shape of *Pickwick Papers* into the great psychological social novels like *Bleak House* or *Our Mutual Friend*. The Victorian novelists were to carry the symbolisation of personal conflict in fictitious forms to the height of art. But Godwin was, in this respect, a pioneer without creative genius. He could imitate forms; he could not create them. The eighteenth-century forms which he had at hand were the least suited for the emotions he wished to express. The picaresque novels of Le Sage or Fielding or Smollett are no happy treasure-trove for the Freudian investigator, no deep reservoir of the subconscious. Yet it was the picaresque form with its central character moving from group to group that made the outline of Godwin's six novels. In Caleb Williams where 'things as they are' —the primary title of the novel—formed part of the subject matter, the old Fieldingesque method, so well adapted to simple social indignation, sufficed. Godwin, in the purely descriptive scenes of this novel—the gaol, the robbers' retreat, the lodgings of the odious Mr. Spurrel—showed a gift for caricature and dialogue that never appeared elsewhere in his work. But for the fall from grace of noble Falkland, his dark, resolute pursuit of Williams, the hero's nightmare flight from omnipotent anger, his final resolution and defiance, the forms of Fielding and Smollett gave no answer. So it was with the endless flight of St. Leon before the effects of his own magic powers, or of Mandeville's inescapable corruption from pride and suspicion.

Something Godwin may have found in the works of a greater novelist than Fielding or Smollett—Richardson, though mainly one suspects through his Continental imitators. Whether, however, by direct influence, or through the enervated medium of Rousseau or of Henry Mackenzie, there is an interesting parallel between Richardson's approach to his principal characters—his portrayal of the seeming omnipotence of the guilty Mr. B. and Lovelace, his emphasis upon the final victory of the innocent Pamela and Clarissa—and Godwin's greatest successes in his novels—the psychology of Falkland, Williams or Mandeville, and the moral order they symbolise. Richardson, of course, was an artist of a different class from Godwin, but there is also a similar parallel between their principal defects, The prolixity of *St. Leon*, *Caleb Williams*, and *Mandeville* springs, in some degree, from lack of formal sense, but it is also, in part, the logical outcome of that same itching obsession with human motive that produces the most tedious passages of *Clarissa* and *Grandison*, as it does the most brilliant.

Godwin, it must be noted, belongs on this side to the greatest stream of eighteenth-century fiction—that of Richardson, Prévost and Sade. Their analysis of power, guilt and pursuit were expressed in sexual symbols, his in the more trite language of social melodrama and historical romance.

In this choice of expression, of course, he followed the fashionable 'Gothic' trend of his day, the course of Mrs. Radclyffe and 'Monk' Lewis, the stage convention of his successful playwright friend, Holcroft, and his less successful playwright friend, Coleridge. The total failure of his own plays might have warned him against it, for, except in the episodes of Williams's discovery of Falkland's mysterious chest and the visit of the wandering alchemist to St. Leon's lakeside Eden, he is not happy in it. The stately, if somewhat stilted eighteenth-century style, so well suited for

Political Justice, sits comically upon the narration of mystery and horror, and his reverence for the decencies of language forbade him the extravagances and vulgarities in which Lewis or Mrs. Radclyffe developed their Gothic tales. In this combination of formal language and romantic narrative he is more akin to Sir Walter Scott, whose work was still unwritten when *Caleb Williams* and *St. Leon* appeared. Indeed, some of his most successful passages—the description of the battle of Pavia and of the dungeons of Bethlem Gabor in *St. Leon*, the ill-fated Royalist rising in *Mandeville*, are a foretaste of Scott at his best.

But Gothic mysteries and historical romances were alike as inadequate as the picaresque to contain the subtle, psychological pessimism of Godwin's emotions. Like so many figures of the 'Romantic movement', he was drawn to the literature of an earlier age to satisfy his needs. The 'old dramatists', not only Shakespeare, but, more importantly, Webster, Massinger, Beaumont and Fletcher absorbed his imagination, and it is not, I think, fanciful to find in their febrile, manic depiction of human evil and violent passions the source of his most successful and original passages.

There is a frightening chasm, a nightmare dissociation between the gloomy tortured lives of Godwin's heroes and the sweet reasonableness, the universal good sense of *Political Justice*, though the horror of the novels gives full answer to the facile criticism of Godwin's anarchism on the grounds of psychological naïveté and failure to consider the problem of evil. It is true that the dichotomy is there, damaging both political treatise and romance, but Godwin was fully aware of this schizophrenic tendency. After the publication of *Caleb Williams* in which he bade defiance to the morose tyranny of his Calvinist childhood—father, God and all the powers there are—he attempted in every successive novel to suggest an answer to man's solitude, fear and isolating pride. His answers were of two kinds, both, of course, embedded in the thought of his age. In *Fleetwood* we are offered the ennobling answer of man communing with nature in the person of the sage—almost Chinese in type—M. Ruffigny, who from the majestic heights of the Alps—the El Dorado of so much eighteenth-century aspiration—gives counsels of order, decency, the nobility of man and the sublimity of the rivers and hills. The excellent family of the Macneils, in the same novel, resident among the more picturesque but still ennobling scenes of the Lake District, suggest the second solution—the simple, cultivated, busy life of domestic bliss. But it is in the almost Swiss Family Robinson happiness of St. Leon's retreat on the Swiss lakeside that we get the crown of these two escapes from the awful choice between solitude and despair or the pursuit of power and degradation. It is in St. Leon's wife, Marguerite—the image of Mary Wollstonecraft—that the highest virtues are embodied. In the sublimity of nature, in the deep communings of a solitary mind is shown the path of Wordsworth. In the simple pleasures of amiable intercourse, in the domestic fireside, in the little polite group of compatible tempers, is offered the eighteenth-century answer. It was thus with his gardening schemes and his letter-writing that Shenstone fought melancholy; it was so with his hares and his tea with Mrs. Unwin that Cowper fought the inevitability of Hell; this was the solace of Streatham's garden and Dr. Burney's drawing-room for Johnson's agonised mind. The flames of the Manichaean dilemma leapt up and licked at the sensitive mind in the eighteenth century as in our own. For all those who cannot follow Mr. Huxley into his Yogic retreat from their ardour, or escape with Mr. Graham Greene into the solace of the Church, for all those who hate the forces of power—whether of *laissez-faire* capitalism or State tyranny—and must yet find their solution in man's own natural goodness, the novels of Godwin, with all their absurdities, demand attention.

6

ON RE-READING 'THE ROVER'

JOHN LEHMANN

WHY does one suddenly begin re-reading an author one has left on the shelves for a whole decade or more? Sometimes, it seems, after an early and absorbing enthusiasm, one is so saturated with an author's works that they exist more in one's mind than in the printed volumes; and if one starts to re-read, the pages seem dry and lifeless beside the peopled landscape they have formed in one's memory. One drops them at last; one turns to other authors and the dust accumulates over them; but all the time, as the inner landscape grows imperceptibly more remote, more blurred, curiosity and the stirring of a taste, once stimulated so strongly, begin to increase without one's knowing it. It is like the pressure in a closed saucepan as it is brought slowly to the boil: suddenly the lid can withstand the steam no longer, and out the water foams with a clatter and hiss.

Something like that, at any rate, happened to me with the works of Joseph Conrad. In my twenties I read him persistently, ardently. Gradually my enthusiasm tailed off, was crowded out by other enthusiasms; then at the beginning of the war I turned back to him, and found in *The End of the Tether*, *Victory*, *Lord Jim* and many of the shorter stories those qualities which make Conrad of such incomparable value at a time like that: his belief in courage, in loyalty, in the sea and the peoples who live by means of the sea. Night after night I went through the row of volumes in those months of menacing calm—in many ways so like the atmosphere Conrad loved to build up—more critical, perhaps, than I had been before of certain blemishes of overwriting, of those over-studied, over-painted effects that just betray the brilliant foreigner, but relishing far more and seeing further into the moral pattern that is behind all he wrote. Then, after 1940, I dropped him almost as suddenly as I had picked him up again; and it was not till the other day that—the saucepan suddenly boiling—I took *The Rover* down and began to read it.

My first reaction was, I think, surprise that I had denied myself such a pleasure for so long: a pleasure produced not only by the matter of the story but by Conrad's manner of unfolding it. But it was not long before I began to be aware of some other impression, an evocation that excited me though I could not at once place it. In his painting of Peyrol, Conrad creates a background of indefinable romance and mystery, by the touches, scattered all through the book, of his past as a Brother of the Coast. I doubt if he expected his readers to know what that name implied; perhaps he preferred them not to know, for he lets just enough information slip through for one to be able to form a picture of a lawless pirate life in the Indian Ocean, of comradeships in exotic dangers and a gathering together of strange adventurous lives outside the reach and restraint of civilised society. When Lieutenant Réal asks Peyrol whether he has ever been in prison:

> It roused Peyrol nearly into a shout. 'Heavens! No! Prison! What do you mean by prison? . . . I have been a captive to savages,' he added, calming down, 'but that's a very old story. I was young and foolish then. Later, when a grown man, I was a slave to the famous Ali-Kassim. I spent a fortnight in chains on my legs and arms in the yard of a mud fort on the shores of the Persian Gulf. There was nearly a score of us Brothers of the Coast in the same predicament. . . . There was not a single one of his thousand blackamoors that could lay a gun properly. But Ali-Kassim made war like a prince. We sailed, a regular fleet, across the gulf, took a town on the coast of Arabia somewhere, and looted it. Then I and the others managed to

get hold of an armed dhow, and we fought our way right through the blackamoor's fleet. Several of us died of thirst later. All the same, it was a great affair. But don't you talk to me of prisons. A proper man if given a chance to fight can always get himself killed. . . .'

No more is added to this barbaric glimpse of Peyrol's youth; and then, a few chapters later, Peyrol's recognition of the English sailor who has been trapped in his tartane as a former brother gives Conrad the opportunity to add a few more illuminating touches, and to underline his characteristically Conradian conception of the Brotherhood as an association of brave men above the pettiness of national hatreds:

'The first suspicion of that amazing fact had intruded on Peyrol while he was bandaging that head by the light of the smoky lamp. Since the fellow still lived, it was not in Peyrol to finish him off or let him lie unattended like a dog. And then this was a sailor. His being English was no obstacle to the development of Peyrol's mixed feelings in which hatred certainly had no place. Amongst the members of the Brotherhood it was the Englishmen whom he preferred. He had also found amongst that them particular and loyal appreciation, which a Frenchman of character and ability will receive from Englishmen sooner than from any other nation . . . And so that youngster had turned into this English man-of-war's man! In the fact itself there was nothing impossible. You found Brothers of the Coast in all sorts of ships and in all sorts of places. Peyrol had found one once in a very ancient and hopeless cripple practising the profession of a beggar on the steps of Manila cathedral; and had left him the richer by two broad gold pieces to add to his secret hoard. There was a tale of a Brother of the Coast having become a mandarin in China, and Peyrol believed it. One never knew where and in what position one would find a Brother of the Coast. . . .'

A few pages later, there is another glimpse, skilfully introduced, which shows how thoroughly Conrad entered imaginatively into his characters, so that a passing simile naturally evokes a detail from memory:

'The face of the farmhouse might have been the face of a house from which all the inhabitants had fled suddenly. In the high part of the building the window of the lieutenant's room remained open, both glass and shutter. By the door of the salle the stable fork leaning against the wall seemed to have been forgotten by the sans-culotte. This aspect of abandonment struck Peyrol with more force than usual. He had been thinking so hard of all these people that to find no one about seemed unnatural and even depressing. He had seen many abandoned places in his life, grass huts, mud forts, king's palaces — temples from which every white-robed soul had fled. Temples, however, never looked quite empty. The gods clung to their own. Peyrol's eyes rested on the bench against the wall of the salle. . . .'

There are not more than three or four other such touches in the book, but their cumulative effect is powerful, giving Peyrol a legendary perspective in the mind of the reader, and continually throwing into relief the brooding stillness of the actual time of the narrative and the quality of charged interim about the half-dozen characters whose drama is acted out, with a slow fatality, against the almost empty scene. It is the way of poetry, a touching of chords that awaken echoes in the deeper chambers of the imagination, so that Peyrol himself assumes a symbolic character in a setting where, enveloped in Conrad's atmospheric prose, the farmstead 'like a lighthouse' at the end of the peninsula and the limitless horizons of sea also acquire the resonance of poetic symbols:

'What made for him the life of any strange shore were the craft that belonged to it: canoes, catamarans, ballahous, praus, lorchas, mere dug-outs, or even rafts of tied logs with a bit of mat for a sail from which naked brown men fished along stretches of white sand crushed under the tropical skyline, sinister in its glare and with a thunder-cloud crouching on the horizon. But here he beheld

a perfect serenity, nothing sombre on the shore, nothing ominous in the sunshine. The sky rested lightly on the distant and vaporous outline of the hills; and the immobility of all things seemed poised in the air like a gay mirage. On this tideless sea several tartanes lay becalmed in the Petite Passe between Porquerolles and Cape Esterel, yet theirs was not the stillness of death but of light slumber, the immobility of a smiling enchantment, of a Mediterranean fair day, breathless sometimes but never without life. Whatever enchantment Peyrol had known in his wandering it had never been so remote from all thoughts of strife and death, so full of smiling security, making all his past appear to him like a chain of lurid days and sultry nights. He thought he would never want to get away from it. . . .'

This 'smiling enchantment', with its unmistakable reminiscences of Shelley's *Invitation*, is no less feelingly created, no less symbolically appropriate than its eventual reversal. Towards the climax of the book, as the drama quickens, Peyrol hears the thunderstorm that menaces his plans, gathering in the west:

'For a moment all his faculties seemed paralysed by that faint sound. On that sea ruled by the gods of Olympus he might have been a pagan mariner subject to Jupiter's caprices; but like the defiant pagan he shook his fist vaguely at space which answered him by a short and threatening mutter. . . .'

It was this passage which crystallised the thought that had been growing in my mind from the moment I had become aware of Conrad's poetic approach to his theme, and gave me the answer to the problem that had been teasing me increasingly as I read through the book. The evocation, the parallel that excited me was, of course, to Homer. Was it not Odysseus returning at last to Ithaca, with all his fabulous doings in the Trojan War and his fabulous adventures on the homeward journey, that Conrad's drawing of Peyrol suggested? And did not the conception of the brotherhood of gallant warriors call to mind some of the most famous encounters in the *Iliad*? In the great encounter between Diomedes and Glaucus, Glaucus entrances his Achaean adversary by the story of his legendary ancestor Bellerophon's exploits, and instead of fighting, discovering that their grandfathers had been friends, they leap down from their chariots and exchange armour. The discovery by Peyrol that Symons, the English sailor who has fallen into his hands, was also once a Brother, evokes exactly the same spirit: 'As against a wearer of epaulettes mutual protection was the first duty between Brothers of the Coast. The unexpectedness of that claim coming to him after twenty years invested it with an extraordinary strength.' Again, in the great set-piece at the end of *The Rover*, Conrad introduces the following dialogue between the captain of the corvette that has captured Peyrol's tartane and Nelson, present as Admiral of the English blockading fleet:

'You have a very smart little ship, Vincent. Very fit for the work I have given you to do. French built, isn't she?'

'Yes, my lord. They are great shipbuilders.'

'You don't seem to hate the French, Vincent,' said the Admiral, smiling faintly.

'Not that kind, my lord,' said Captain Vincent with a bow. 'I detest their political principles and the characters of their public men, but your lordship will admit that for courage and determination we could not have found worthier adversaries anywhere on this globe.'

'I have never said they were to be despised,' said Lord Nelson. 'Resource, courage, yes. . . .'

There is, behind this scene, surely exactly the same idea of an affinity behind all noble enmities that inspired the encounter in Book Seven of the *Iliad* between Hector and Ajax:

'Ajax', said the great Hector of the flashing helmet, 'you are big, strong and able, and the best spearman on your side. Admitting that, I suggest we cease fighting for the day, for we can always meet again and go on till the powers above decide between us. Also, the light is failing. We should do well to take the

hint. The Achaeans would be very glad to see you back at the ships, your own friends and followers above all; while I should get a warm welcome in King Priam's city from the Trojans and the Trojan ladies in their trailing gowns, assembled for thanksgiving to the gods on my behalf. But first let us exchange gifts of honour, so that it may be said by Trojans and Achaeans alike that we two fought each other tooth and nail, but presently were reconciled and parted friends. . . .'

But if Peyrol, the hero of *The Rover*, has been given a legendary background of exotic violence, Conrad has matched him, not merely against the national English enemy, but against an adversary of far deeper and more fundamental opposition, the embittered ex-sansculotte Scevola. He, too, is given by his creator a background of only half-suggested violence, but of a very different sort. Scevola is painted as a doctrinaire agent of the Terror, obsessed by the simplified intellectual patterns of the Revolution, a fanatic who believes that at the bottom of every trouble can be found an 'aristo' and to whom the only 'patriots' are the sansculottes like himself who were prepared to murder an 'aristo' on sight, without trial or question. Everything is confused into conspiracy against the Revolution in his one-track mind: working himself up into a frenzy because he suspects that Lieutenant Réal has a secret liaison with Arlette, he paces up and down outside the farmhouse in the night:

'He became giddy with virtuous fury. There was enough evidence there for any revolutionary tribunal to cut all their heads off. Tribunal! There was no Tribunal! No revolutionary justice! No patriots! He hit his shoulder against the wall in his distress with such force that he rebounded. This world was no place for patriots. . . .'

The irony of Scevola's position is that what he stands for is already old-fashioned. The bright ideals and blood-stained savageries of the Revolution are receding into the past as Bonaparte's star steadily rises. He sees the priests restored to their churches, the witch-hunts against the 'aristos' called off, and people openly daring to ignore and despise the untainted servants of revolutionary passion such as himself—even muttering against him for his former butcheries. It is from Arlette, the child whose parents he had been instrumental in doing to death during the Toulon terror, and whom he had afterwards married, that we get our brief, lurid glimpses of the horrors of those days and nights that already seem as legendary as Peyrol's exploits in the Brotherhood of the Coast. For Arlette they have been a nightmare so terrible that they have frozen the deepest springs in her nature; it is only when she is conscious of her love for the Lieutenant that she tries to withdraw this obstruction by telling her story to the Abbé:

'The bodies of her father and mother were lying across the doorway. The room was full of gunpowder smoke. She wanted to fling herself on the bodies and cling to them, but Scevola took her under the arm and lifted her over them. He seized her hand and made her run with him, or rather dragged her downstairs. Outside on the pavement some dreadful men and many fierce women with knives joined them. They ran along the streets brandishing pikes and sabres, pursuing other groups of unarmed people, who fled round corners with loud shrieks.

'I ran in the midst of them, Monsieur l'Abbé,' Arlette went on in a breathless murmur. 'Whenever I saw any water I wanted to throw myself into it, but I was surrounded on all sides, I was jostled and pushed and most of the time Scevola held my hand very tight. When they stopped at a wine shop, they would offer me some wine. My tongue stuck to the roof of my mouth and I drank. The wine, the pavements, the arms and the faces, everything was red. I had red splashes all over me. I had to run with them all day, and all the time I felt as if I were falling down, and down, and down. The houses were nodding at me. The sun would go out at times. And suddenly I heard myself yelling exactly like the others. Do you understand, Monsieur l'Abbé? The very same words!'

In *The Rover* Conrad might, at first sight, be thought only to be telling one of his masterly atmospheric stories of sea-faring, conspiracy and romance; but the deeper moral pattern is, it seems to me, worked out with great care, though never obtrusively. After her traumatic experiences in Toulon as a child, Arlette is brought back to life by her love for Réal, and that love absolves her guilt of blood. Parallel with her redemption is Peyrol's: he is brought back from his aimless, retired existence on the farmstead into action and new identification with his beloved France by the plot to deceive the English fleet; and his death in that action, inspired both by patriotic devotion and selfless love for Arlette, absolves the lawless, pirate exploits of his youth.

Equally important—perhaps all-important—is the contrast between Peyrol and Scevola; and one cannot escape the impression that by pitting these two men against one another, Conrad was dramatising a conflict about which he had brooded a great deal and which he had come to believe went down to the roots of life. It is an essentially modern theme, more vivid and urgent to us now, perhaps, even than when Conrad wrote, the subject of some of the greater novels of our time, such as *The Power and the Glory*: the opposition of the man of heart and the man of head in a revolutionary time. Scevola is a bigot of the idea: he has committed murders without number in the name of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity, and is prepared, years later, to commit more in order that the Revolution shall not be corrupted by the slow insidious action of life and time. No matter to him if the cruelties and injustices he demands are worse even than those the Revolution originally came about to eradicate; he is one who is entirely absorbed in the idea of the best, and has never heard of the saying that the best is the worst enemy of the good. Peyrol has also committed crimes enough in his equally fabulous past; he has slaughtered, he has destroyed, he has robbed, but the difference is defined by Réal as he meditates on the way a web of sympathies and more highly-charged emotions is gradually entangling him at the farmhouse: 'He had developed a liking for old Peyrol, the only man who had nothing to do with the revolution—who had not even seen it at work. The sincere lawlessness of the ex-Brother of the Coast was refreshing. That one was neither a hypocrite nor a fool. When he robbed or killed it was not in the name of the sacred revolutionary principles or for the love of humanity.' It would have been easy enough to contrast Scevola with a man whose hands were unstained with blood. Conrad went one further: he wanted to extract a deeper condemnation of Scevola's sort. The final kidnapping of Scevola on to the tartane, as it goes out on the mission from which Peyrol knows it cannot return, is a convenient device to prepare the way for the happily-ever-after ending for Arlette and Réal; but it also gives an extra ironical twist to Scevola's story and puts in a final brilliant spotlight the fundamental contrast between the two men. This end has the justice and power of a great poetic tragedy. It is profoundly symbolical; and if Captain Vincent and Admiral Lord Nelson utter the last words on the Homeric theme of honourable enmity—a sentiment that could never have had any echo in Scevola's heart, any more than in the hearts of the ideological fanatics of newer Tribunals who have succeeded him today—Conrad himself, in the final paragraph of the book, like the last brief chorus of a Greek play, has the last word on his hero, Peyrol:

> 'The blue level of the Mediterranean, the charmer and the deceiver of audacious men, kept the secret of its fascination—hugged to its calm breast the victims of all the wars, calamities and tempests of its history, under the marvellous purity of the sunset sky. A few rosy clouds floated high up over the Esterel range. The breath of the evening breeze came to cool the heated rocks of Escampobar, and the mulberry tree, the only big tree on the head of the peninsula, standing like a sentinel at the gate of the yard, sighed faintly in a shudder of all its leaves, as if regretting the Brother of the Coast, the man of dark deeds, but of large heart, who often at noonday would lie down to sleep under its shade.'

'Compère, qu'as-tu vu?
—J'ai vu Pampelune
qui portait la lune
dans son tablier.'[1]

COMPÈRE, VOUS MENTEZ!...

NOËL DEVAULX

THE Italian builders have penetrated even into this part of the country and have changed the character of the landscape. Our greyish-pink stone, which blends so well with the red soil and the chestnut groves, has been discarded in favour of vivid compositions tending to be purple in colour, Genoese work, and balustrades of lozenge tiles. Worse still, building-tricks, false windows, false stone, now deface even the remotest village. I can see one of these constructions from my study, where once upon a time a gigantic plane-tree spread out its branches in a golden fan.

I am all the more conscious of the seriousness of the change since I am, myself, a builder. It is true that the brass plate on my door invests me with the title of architect, and I do remotely recall having passed all the examinations, and having once cared violently about the niceties of the great art. But I have grown old; doubts have assailed me and I have let the years slip by, unheeded. Illness keeps me in this prosperous village where thermal waters attract people living on small incomes, gouty vine-growers, and retired shopkeepers whose whole life now centres on a little house and a small garden bordered by hyacinths and enclosed in trellises. And so it has come about that my only remaining links with living architecture are subscriptions to professional societies. And then, tastes are changing. Although I take up commissions at reasonable terms, there is an increasing tendency among clients to employ workmen directly in the cheapest possible way, sometimes labouring alongside them and vying with them in vulgarity.

Apart from the prospect of spending my last years in a hectic battle against forgetfulness, there was nothing left to trouble my old age. I had already seen the best of my contemporaries leave me. One old foreman remained faithful to our joint undertakings and looked after the small amount of repair work still entrusted to me. My home had an air of melancholy about it, which fitted the celibacy of an old man. It was entirely without character, low and overgrown by virginia creeper, and left entirely to the care of a conscientious servant.

If an inspector from some strange Scotland Yard were ever to come to see how the spirit of eccentricity had effected an entry into my house, I think he would go straight to the drawer where I keep the strangest collection of plans ever assembled by an architect. In one a ship seems to have run aground in a field. A distinguished sailor, whose mind they say was clouded towards the end of his life, built this dream in stone, complete with towers shaped like funnels, bridges, companion hatches, portholes. In another, buildings with odd profiles stand in a peaceful garden: mills, dams, campaniles, all devoid of thickness —a massed growth of uninhabitable architecture. The colour is applied with the lavish insolence characteristic of our romance art. A gigantic wheel, arrested in its course, a marvel of stereotomy, provides the final touch which entirely bewilders any visitor. This, however, is its only practical result, for its creator was an ordinary quarryman whom I once knew and employed, who spent everything he had on elaborating his Folly and who, although otherwise very pleasant, believed that he was the inventor of the wheel, a brilliant invention which he thought clearly deserved this sumptuous monument. In his company I used to admire the

[1]What have you seen, my friend? I've seen Pampeluna carrying the moon, in her apron pocket.

naïve wonders of his creation, and it often occurred to me that his anxious spirit and mine had much in common; even if I had not, I think, invented the wheel, and that the mildest mockery would have been hypocrisy on my part.

Have I not always cherished the illusion of art severed from all earthly bonds? Is this not unforgivable in an architect? And have I not, in my audacity, gone as far as to search for its expression in abstract theories and symbols? In the days when I used to drink and talk, if I had been a painter, the remotest reminder of the solid object would have seemed untenable to me. To my mind, the slightest resemblance would have carried with it the mark of all the adulation and propaganda which have sullied the pure face of Beauty. If I had been a poet, I would have purged writing of the rational purpose of signs. As a musician, how would I have gone about my task? Should I have attacked sound? I used to wonder. Between drinks I used to track down with sombre violence all evidence of human presence in art.

I had, therefore, well passed the age where one lives on illusions and ideas, confidently awaiting dazzling commissions and the glory of interviews and exhibitions. I had even acquired bourgeois habits which were markedly opposed to talent's natural demands. One day, my dog and I were taking our siesta when he began to whimper so as to wake me up without committing himself to anything definite. My doorbell consists of an ancient mechanism, and when (as usually happens) I forget to wind it, it makes a curious sound which has particularly unfortunate effects on animals. Without haste, I pulled on an old pair of striped flannel trousers, long and full and of obscure origin, and a comfortable, roomy coat whose dirtiness I would not notice were I not vain enough to like showing it off on my walks with Joyeux. I stood up. I need a stick when walking, and my dog, who is able to reach the latch of the door, was already admitting my visitors. I saw a large lady, enveloped in layers of veils, also carrying a stick, but obviously only as decoration. She was accompanied by a little girl of about ten, who had wasted no time in starting a conversation with the dog. I apologised and led the way into the house, discreetly shutting the door of my bedroom, whose state would have cost me what little regard the worthy woman had left for me, as was clear from the ill-concealed distaste with which she observed my clothes. Once in my study, I breathed more easily. I ordered Joyeux to stay outside, but the child protested in a tone of voice which I disliked. 'Spoilt brat', I decided, and turning to the large lady: 'If your daughter wishes to play with the dog, she can stay in the garden. We shall be more at our ease.' To which the large lady firmly answered: 'Mademoiselle is not my daughter', as if I had committed a social blunder. Then, in a lower voice, 'Mademoiselle Lucia (she pronounced the name in the Italian way) has known neither father nor mother. One parent died in giving her birth, the other, embittered and refusing to kiss the innocent child, died of a fever, leaving property . . .', she stopped, preparing her effect, '. . . of considerable value. It is very sad,' she added, eyeing me severely.

She spoke with ceremony, rarely looking up from the spots on my waistcoat and holding her stick in a very odd way so that she could give it those twirls which I had till then believed to be one of the lost secrets of ceremonies of Versailles. She then informed me, between two genealogical extracts, that the child's guardians were a lawyer and, by virtue of a dispensation of which I was spared no flattering detail, a vicar apostolic. With a sigh she continued: 'On the death of Monsieur, Mademoiselle had no relation but myself. Madame was gracious enough always to treat me as a relative, although in fact we were only foster-sisters. You will be better able to judge her choice when I tell you that as a child I read all the works of the Abbé Delille . . . in hiding: my father was a miller. Flour and letters! . . .' At this point Lucia stopped pulling the ears of my dog and, without malice, put her finger on her governess's mouth. I nearly burst out laughing. What stopped me was, I believe, the perfect serenity with which the large lady accepted this insolence. Her charge's education seemed to me to have begun decidedly badly. The child seated herself in front of me: 'I saw you with your dog

yesterday, *Monsieur l'architecte'*, she said without any suggestion of shyness. 'What is his name? He is a very nice dog.' 'Joyeux,' I said, annoyed without knowing why.

'How old?' she continued.

'Sixty-eight,' I answered, caught unawares.

She eyed me coldly: 'A dog cannot be sixty-eight; the oldest ones are fifteen. They get killed because they smell. But if you smell, you cannot be killed, because you have a soul.'

I was very angry and was just going to congratulate Madame Camille on the results of her tuition, but her obvious and naïve admiration silenced me again: she was holding her breath and had stopped twirling her stick. Even Joyeux was almost attentive. Besides, the child paid no attention to my annoyance and went on: 'So that is settled: Joyeux is my friend and you are my architect. We are going to build a house . . .'

* * *

I half closed my eyes in order to fight better against a shadow. I know that it would be vain to retrace the fading outlines, to arrest the decay of detail, to hurriedly restore that inflection of the voice, that movement of the hand, as they sink one after the other into oblivion, and memory grows feeble.

Very well then, let darkness come! Let there be nothing left of that reality which is an illusion, nothing to put face to face with tenderness! Art alone is immutable. The painful precariousness it inspires in us is the result of the contact of our minds (light as rivers without banks) with eternity. Similarly, a prayer said, we feel our heaviness. But art and prayer remain, two ever-gaping entrances, two issues (opposed, perhaps) from a tunnel. Daughters of grief and hope, still more moving because endangered by the tumult of the senses and the ruses of magic. Princesses of a tragic tale, re-enacted every night.

There are, doubtless, many analogies to be drawn between love and our attitude towards art. In both cases, the subject drives reason to despair. Its richness is strange. Its live impact is lost to the masses. But temples stand on high promontories, whereas tenderness lives in our torn valleys where, at the forking of the trees, death is watching us.

* * *

But I must return to the consultation. I have the greatest difficulty in holding the attention of my little client, who is quite taken up with the tail and ears of the dog, my paper-weight with flowers stuck into it at random, and the little objects which the labourers turn up and bring to me: an amusing piece of pottery, an obsidian axe, a few coins . . . I am, you see, being the devil's advocate. I plead for the usefulness of fireplaces. I try to show to its advantage the thankless rôle of foundations, while recognising the charm and antique virtues of domes; I forecast disappointments without, however, speaking too harshly of my workmen. Nevertheless, agreement is reached on basic principles: all the houses we know are appalling, with the exception of one or two cathedrals, the Bayou of Angkor and the Parthenon. As she is straining to develop her ideas, a small light in her eyes is smiling at me and inspires me to open my drawer. Besides the marvels I have already described, my collection includes small caprices which up till then were of interest only to me. One of them is an old carriage—the owners removed the wheels and encased the body in a concrete foundation. When business improved, a snug-looking chalet was dovetailed on to the caravan without, however, destroying the original touch reminiscent of nomad life. On the contrary, a horse's head, obtained from over the door of a horse-butcher, is attached to the gable. An extraordinarily tense expression shows the praiseworthy effort which the animal, no doubt hidden behind the wall, is making to wrench the house from the clutch of the virginia-creeper.

I have also the admiral's house, and its details, the vents, gangways, etc., hold our attention for an instant. But the most genuine approval goes to the vagaries of the quarryman who invented the wheel. The little girl particularly appreciates and understands the real meaning of the wheel itself, from which a burst of minarets, domes, and spindly spires seems to open out like a firework. On the other hand, we

decisively reject the reproductions of famous statues which the master had thought necessary to put up round the central symbol, even though he had tried to show them at their best by colouring them bright pink.

Taken all in all, the success exceeds my fondest hopes. Delighted claps. Whirls of joy. Joyeux is bouncing up and down senselessly. Dame Camille alone maintains a proper attitude As for me, I am as good as my word. Something is silhouetted before my eyes; surfaces are turning; volumes falling into place. We must go out, it seems, and inspect the *décor* already there for our use. I am won over by the general enthusiasm and forget to change my coat, as I realise out on the road, on the arm of Madame Camille. As there is a little wind, her veils are brushing my face. The child and the dog run on ahead.

I know the path from which Lucia is waving to us. After lingering for a time by the cork-trees, it reveals its eagerness and climbs straight up to the old lime-kiln among the lentisks and the rosemary. There is at this point a hollow in the side of the mountain, a natural shelter at the bottom of which lies a ravine covered with shrubs, and dry at this time of the year. We reached a wide ledge planted with fruit trees. From there the vines are terraced up the mountain side. I often stopped here when out for a walk with Joyeux, and forgot the last defeat of pure art amid the scents and the heat. I used to sit down on exactly the same place on a flat stone wall between two black earthenware jars of ancient shape, with my dog's muzzle between my knees. The valley before me is like a hand stretched out to offer, according to the season, delicate almond blossom, wild irises, the foam of mimosas, the flames of the vines —an offering to the clouds which almost touch the earth and which seem to me to be carrying back home in their distended flanks—stretched as if they would burst and spill out their mythical load—the Lethe-eyed gods, exiled long ago but still the lords of this land.

A little reflection shatters the sense of well-being left by this visit. I have settled down for an evening's reading while Madame Voiduron, my servant, is finishing her clearing-up in the kitchen. My mind glides on the surface of words. I hurry, locked in my own thoughts, with the unpleasant impression that someone is signalling to me in distress. I watch the signals without seeing them. Let us shut the book. Madame Voiduron puts her head into the room and wishes me good night. She has got into the habit of taking refuge in my house when her husband gets drunk and wants to beat her, which causes me nightly encounters of which she is greatly ashamed —the rogue having gone as far as to rouse the neighbours, those notable experts in conjugal morality. It is true that on the next day he comes to assure me of his devotion and, without a word from me, mends the pump or cuts the wood. His wife does not know how to make amends for the harm she imagines must have been caused to my good name. Her humility does not allow her to express her goodwill in so many words, but she has found the silent way: she has managed to melt entirely into the furniture and accessories of my bachelor household. Her heart lives in the clock, her heavy slippers resemble the feet of the stove, her soft face reappears in the lines of the pitchpine, in the coat-stand of the passage.

When her bulky person appears before me for the ceremony of accounts, I expect her to open up like my linen cupboard and display neat piles of sheets and cloths. An uncommonly good ear is needed to hear her working in the pantry, sometimes talking to herslf or humming her favourite song, sad summary of her life:

Guillotin,
Ce matin
A tant bu de pots de vin
Qu'il branle

for the last word she substitutes the meaningless *brande*:

Qu'il brande,
Qu'il brande . . .

Madame Voiduron's head has remained one second too long in the space behind the door after having bid me good-night, which is equivalent to a pathetic reproach.

* * *

I spent a few days of uncertainty. That, however, is an over-statement, for in fact

things were as clear as could be: my client deserved to be spanked. I myself was to blame for having treated her, if only for a moment, with the attention which one lends to serious matters. My fairy palaces were crumbling like proud cities, strewn with domes, which the clouds glorify for the bitter pleasure of destruction. Madame Voiduron went on with her housework and, like her, the house had taken up the strange colour which heralds bad news before the postman brings it, or a long illness before the auscultation. I opened my mad drawer more frequently. Certain details, not hitherto noticed, appeared full of evil significance. My fundamental symbols, the stone wheel, the dead carriage of the admiral, took on a forbidding air.

To crown it all, an abominable tradesman of the most repellent vulgarity arrived just at that moment. He was one of those hucksters whose loud voice is heard controlling boats in a fun-fair. This one had made a fortune selling braces. He had then started a vast organisation covering all the bankruptcies between Brest and Vladivostock: buying for nothing, sorting, selling again through the small peddling trade. This man, who was convinced of the omnipotence of money and who at a glance had estimated the extent of my poverty, thought he was doing me an honour in asking me to 'give body', as he said, to the plan he had conceived for a grotesque country house, riddled with fortifications and flanked with towers, the highest of which, surmounted by a knight, worthily crowned the work. Even though my funds were at their lowest, I did a thing I had never done before, even for the most arrogant *petits bourgeois* in search of a shelter: I rudely threw him out, him and his horrible wife. I can only believe that their visit had been the cause of an explosion within myself from which they had been the first to suffer and which had painfully surprised them, secure as they were in their good consciences. The man was bundled in an enormous coat of yellow imitation lamb, like those lunatics who in the height of summer disappear beneath scarves and rugs. From it, there emerged a grasping face, dangerously bloodshot, ravaged by intemperance. His wife, on the other hand, had no definite features and was constantly looking from side to side, as she used to do once upon a time on the village square for fear of the policeman. It was finished! The decision had been taken without my explicit agreement: yes, this was the end of working to no purpose! Still less for money! He who has promised to wach over the lilies of the field (but has not the symbol got a discouraging suggestion of purity?), the lilies of the field, as I was saying, whose gratuitous nature is so obvious, and whose form puzzles our reason, well, let Him work things out!

Madame Voiduron had not tired of wishing me a good-night. And in the morning, as I rose, I found, in the letter-box, a letter from the lawyer enclosing a cheque for a considerable sum, and a word from the ecclesiastic asking me to start work at once and to give it my full attention.

* * *

Lucia and I treated the plans as nothing but timid landmarks, anyhow constantly overtaken. Creation took place *in situ*, with the least material obstacle taken as a pretext for elaboration. If I showed anxiety as to the safety of the rocks which hung over us, those calciferous rocks which the sun had deeply veined, Lucia would immediately suggest orchid-shaped stanchions. And from the foreman's shed we now saw a double petal taking shape at a great height, and the golden marble, which is common material here, was imbuing it with the warmth of living flesh.

The principal structure in this immense flower was the calyx. It formed a vast ground-floor, whose pillars, reduced to minimum proportions, seemed stripped of all functional purpose and reduced to nothing by the glass panels. The paving of the only room (which occupied almost the entire covered area) had already cost us innumerable plans, alterations and furious argument. We had finally decided on the main lines to be followed and, as always, we were leaving the details, which form the essence of our work, to the chance of execution and the variations of the stone. We employed a limited scale of clear-cut tones—from the velvety black of an iron ore to the carmine and gold of the porphyries and pyrites—and the scale

was to be adjusted on the mosaic itself, which we both wished to construct of elements in which the natural shape was as integrally important as the colour. So our task was perpetually inventive, inspired by the caprices of the material and executed on a rough canvas, and for a long time we despaired of ever finding a workman capable of giving shape to our ideas. The subject was that moment in creation at which God introduces the animals to the first human couple. Adam was following up the experience of language, which had begun with a word of love, by marking with its royal seal the whale and the butterfly, much as the prudent heir does when he places a small label behind mirrors and below china vases, in order not to have his claim disputed. From the four corners of our mosaic there spread a lavishly-conceived natural history, crammed with exotic beasts and flowers. God stood in the background, offering these unlikely gifts with a full rounded gesture to two children, moulded in the light like the thin, naked figures of Lucas Cranach, who were accepting them with simplicity.

* * *

The building rises between the orchard where the apple, almond and cherry trees are mingled, and the last platform, in the midst of the vines and the rhododendrons. We are planning to preserve these complicated, sloping ledges, reminiscent of the slow steps of an Asian temple, but to abolish one or two levels so as to enlarge the terraces. Soon, high façades will lead the eye from recession to recession, up to the low house, on top of which a wooden form has already been placed where the best of our workmen are constructing the shell of the cupola. Besides the hall, which the mosaic-layer strictly forbids us to enter (we are only able to look at his work through the glass panels choosing his moments of inattention, or else during his expeditions into the high mountains): besides this hall, the plan of the building includes, on one side, the outhouses, and on the other, the apartments of Dame Tartine, dominating the ravine, shut in and hostile to the world. The only room to be inhabited, Lucia says, looks like an annex or rather an epitome of these. For the worthy governess we have ordered soft counterpanes, velvety armchairs, quilted curtains. I had anticipated the need for double windows, and had seen to it—a point for which she was particularly grateful—that the bathroom should be fitted with a footbath in jade green porcelain. The furnishing of the bedroom and the sitting-room is left to her own taste, and we are waiting for the meekest of Greuze paintings to make their appearance, and for the collection of china: little marquises, shepherdesses at the fountain, horse-carriages, flowered boots . . ., to invade the mantelpiece.

* * *

Everything is simple in that quarter where the architect has been given quite clear instructions, but the furniture for the large hall remains the subject of much preoccupation and urgent questioning. We know that the bottom wall, against the rock, will be covered by a tapestry, frankly in the traditional style, where a sumptuous forest in autumn harmonies will glow on a saffron background, enriched with wild berries, large anemones and gaudy butterflies. The doors will be concealed here and there, as will a large number of cupboards, so that nothing should be left about on the paving to mar this feast of colour. But, how about the bed, you will ask? I was for the most humble iron bed, the commonest to be found. Camille was advocating an operatic affair, with columns and draperies; Lucia was reflecting, and seemed to take a malicious delight in our dispute which was not without its overstatements, until the day when she discovered what she wanted: a hammock! It was to her the only shape that a bed could assume in the midst of that exuberant flora, and we had to agree that her argument was well-founded. Dame Camille went as far as to sketch a fantastic hammock with her own hand: a flying throne, whose train would have covered the whole of the mosaic. Finally, all this effort resulted in an exquisite boat with perfect harmony between the stained wickerwork and the glass fibres. A mechanism which Lucia could easily manage allowed her to land and to rise slowly towards the origin of the cupola. She had insisted on having extra

space in her bed so as to sleep in comfort at the side of her favourite, a bear as large as herself, which our hunter had manufactured and whose grim snout, next to the silky hair of my small friend, had a disconcerting appearance which I well remember.

From up there, awakened as she had wished by the first rays of the sun, she could watch the terraces emerge one by one from the morning mist, with their amusing, outlandishly-roofed pavilions, orange trees in tubs and red sand, hot and soft like the sand of the sea. From there she would also be able to search the deep hiding-place where the torrent rages and which at the level of the house is overhung by a footbridge whose narrow fragility makes one dizzy. It had been erected for the builders and we did not bother to replace it by a solid arch, for its mysterious character pleased us. It reminded us of the endless bridges of the ancient cosmogonies which the elect alone could cross and then not without terrible fright. Right at the bottom Lucia could still see the old builders' shed, by now a mass of rambling roses. We knew it would survive the last stroke of the pickaxe, the last touch of the paintbrush.

Beyond the valley, the high mountains face us, where barns and pastures are still to be found at fantastic heights. The range is crowned by rocks, which from this vantage-point take on, according to the hour of the day, the aspect now of dismantled fortresses, now of a giant bird, gripping the mountain between its wings, and tilting its angular head, the better to die.

JASPER

EMMA SMITH

On the day Laura Southey came back from visiting friends at Shillong, her husband shot a tigress in his tea-garden. 'Oh Roger,' she said, as he drove her back from the station that night, 'how dangerous. She might have mauled you. Was she a big one?'

'Big?' said he, 'biggest I've ever seen. Whacking great brute.' He took one hand from the wheel and spread the fingers wide open. 'Couldn't span the pug-mark,' he said, 'that'll show you . . .'

It was no exaggeration, for the tigress had been a fine creature. Laura shuddered when she looked at the close ranks of pampas grass on either side of the car, perfectly still, shining whitely. She urged her husband to drive faster.

'What—scared, old girl?' he said, proud of her alarm. Laura and he had been married only a short time and she was barely accustomed to the idea of wild animals loitering about her home. It was the first tiger Roger had killed, so he was not ashamed to repeat himself more than once as they bounded along the rocky, dust-covered, deathly-deserted road under a blazing Assamese moon.

'I was just having a quiet lie-back round about two o'clock,' he said, 'when that fool Giroo came rushing in all of a sweat, hollering, "Tiger, tiger". So out I went,' said Roger, 'and the coolies were all sitting up in trees shaking with terror—you know what they're like—and while I was wondering where the hell the thing had got to, there she was. Large as life. Near as you are to me. Looked straight up into my face as cool as you please.'

The cold, hill air stirred among the flat, fleshy, jungle leaves, between the black palms.

'Oh Roger,' cried Laura, 'were you frightened?'

'Matter of fact, I wasn't,' said Roger. 'Took me by surprise I suppose. And before I had time to get the wind up, she was dead at my feet. Enormous great beast, Laura, you've no idea.' He took one hand from the steering wheel and held it

out towards her, the fingers stretched wide. 'I couldn't,' he said, 'span her pug-mark, not by more than an inch.'

And so, still talking of the incident, they reached home. There was one thing Roger had not told Laura. He wanted to surprise her, and when she went into the living-room she was very surprised. In a basket before the fire lay a tiger-cub asleep.

Laura knelt on the hearth-rug to touch the little creature with her fingers. The servants pushed their turbaned heads, gaping with grins, around the doorway. Roger filled his pipe and looked with satisfaction at the result of the day's shooting.

'The mother had it in her mouth when I shot her,' said Roger.

At this Laura was torn with pity and love. 'How beautiful he is,' she cried. 'Just look, how lovely. I should like to call him Jasper.'

Roger thought this not at all a foolish name for a tiger, and from that moment the animal was known as Jasper.

He seemed to grow remarkably quickly. In no time at all he was up to Laura's knee, and used to follow her round the house, stopping when she stopped and paying attention to whatever it was she did. She thought him wonderful. 'He is so intelligent,' she said many times to her husband, and at the end of each day, as he leaned back in his sweat-creased shorts, hot and tired, drinking a first whisky before bathing, she would tell him of Jasper's behaviour since breakfast, his latest habits, the way he winked his eyes, his gentleness, his sense of humour. And after dinner, when Jasper stretched himself between them on the hearth asleep, they would point out to one another how finely developed, how long and strong were his limbs, how smoothly his skin lay, of what clear gold his eyes were when he opened them to yawn. Indeed, he was very beautiful, very quiet in his behaviour, and seemed not to give a second thought to the skin of his mother which decorated one wall in the living-room.

Fed bountifully on good, cooked meat, Jasper grew and grew. In the shortest possible time he was waist-high, and the finest specimen of a tiger it was possible to see. Of Roger and Laura he was the pride and joy. Strangers visiting were so shocked by the sight of Jasper appearing round the side of the house that more than once they turned their car hard round on its tracks and drove, white-faced, away. Roger and Laura laughed very gaily when their servants reported such visits, but even their friends from neighbouring tea-gardens, who knew what to expect, were sometimes alarmed when the great tiger came strolling out on to the verandah and down the steps to greet them. Laura, however, laid her small palm confidently on the strong flat head and assured them there was no need to fear. She pulled his ears gently and her eyes shone with love.

'He is so beautiful, don't you think?' she said.

Roger took colour photographs of Jasper standing in the middle of the green brilliant lawn, with a fall of scarlet hibiscus flowers behind him, and the warm Indian sun striking twice as richly on his rich red hide. And softly his golden paws crushed the semi-tropical flowers when he wandered in the garden. Often, spreading wide the fingers of his right hand, Roger would say of him admiringly: 'His mother was a huge great creature too. I couldn't span her pug-mark with my hand, and I can't his.'

Then Laura and Roger had a baby. During the time of her pregnancy, Laura kept the tiger always by her, and the first words she said to Roger after the child was born were ones of anxiety.

'I do hope,' she said, 'that Jasper will like him.'

She introduced the two with trepidation. Jasper put his whiskered head, big as a coal-scuttle, close up to the child and blew softly. Then he turned his amber eyes mildly towards Laura. Much moved, she burst into tears and threw her arms about his neck. The baby awoke and screwed its wizened face up in screams that drowned the sound of Laura's sobbing.

She wanted to call the child Tiger, but Roger thought this was pushing their devotion too far, and compromised by having his son christened John Jasper Southey. John and Jasper showed every sign of friendliness to each other. In spite of this, one of Laura's friends said to her, 'I

wonder how you dare to have that brute around the place with John.'

'Oh, good gracious,' answered Laura laughing, 'there's no need to worry about Jasper. He's as gentle as a kitten.'

'He might be jealous,' said her friend.

Laura, who had never thought of it before, began to watch Jasper for signs of jealousy. She asked her husband what he thought.

'Jealous?' said Roger, 'Why should he be? What, old Jasper? Of course he isn't.'

But all their neighbours seemed to feel the same way about Jasper. What they had previously thought was eccentric and amusing now appeared to them in a sinister light. 'Why,' said one of these, 'Jasper could gobble up little John in one mouthful and not even notice it.'

Laura felt sick and for a moment her face and fingers went white. 'Jasper,' she called, and when he came over to her she looked deeply in his eyes and believed he would not do this. But the talk went on. Roger was teased at the club; Laura reproached at the tea-table. They both became irritable, embarrassed with Jasper and sharp with John.

'Hungerford says we ought to shoot Jasper,' said Roger abruptly one evening.

'Oh no,' cried Laura, horrified, 'No, no; I'd rather shoot John.' She was taken by a fit of violent weeping and Roger left the room gloomily.

One day Laura found Jasper standing by John's pram, his chin resting on the edge, staring in at the sleeping child. She stopped and looked at him, tranced with fear.

'You must never do it Jasper,' she said aloud, 'they would shoot you for that.'

The tiger at once looked up at her and seemed, she thought, to grin.

Laura went straight to Roger. 'Roger,' she said, 'people are right. We ought to send Jasper away for a time. Just till John's older you know. We could have him back again later, couldn't we, in a year or two?'

They talked it over hurriedly and decided to beg a temporary home for him at the nearest Zoo, two hundred miles away. While they were talking, John woke up and began, as he usually did on waking, to cry. 'Oh,' said Laura, putting her hands to her ears, 'that noise, that noise'.

The Zoo authorities were delighted to have Jasper. In a year's time, when John was growing into a pinched little boy with red rims to his pale big eyes, Roger went to visit Jasper in his cage. Laura would have gone too, but John was sick with a cough and so she stayed behind. Roger returned in a few days and looked at Laura sadly.

'He didn't know me,' said Roger, 'and oh, Laura—he's *wild*.'

'Wild?' she asked, trembling.

'Savage—mad as a devil. Laura, I never heard him roar before.'

Within twelve months they were told he had died. John, when he was five years old, took the skin of the tigress from the wall and came crawling on the floor to his mother.

'My name is Jasper, isn't it?' he said, watching her face closely with his ill, impish eyes.

'You know your name is John,' she replied.

'But I'm called Jasper too.'

She leaned forward and struck his frail face as it peered up at her from under the skin's dry folds. Never before had she hit him, nor did she ever do so again. He backed on his knees away from her and opened his mouth in a tiger's roar of defiance, but his wretched stomach rose and took him by the throat, and held him coughing, coughing, on the floor, with the gaudy skin slipping from his thin shoulders and his eyes fixed on his mother.

THE OVEN

ANN CHADWICK

THE two old people had lived all their married lives in one of a pair of very ancient stone cottages high on the lonely bank above the farm where they worked. The other of the pair of cottages, which was separated from their own by a plastered brick partition, had been, in times so far distant that no one living remembered them, a sort of stable. There were in its blackened oak beams holes which had once held the ends of manger bars. Its earthen floor had only in the last hundred years been laid with concrete. The stones of its window-frames were almost as recent. It had a tile instead of a stone roof, with a brick chimney protruding; this chimney led straight to the heart of the final difference existing between the two cottages. Here was an iron range, grate, and oven, and wide, hot-shelf for pots to rest on, oven-flue and draught-regulator built in.

The original cottage still had none of these. Instead, an open hearth, five feet wide and three feet deep, poured smoke and spilled ash into the room. An iron hod was the only cooking arrangement, an iron hod, and behind the fire, far to the left under the stone stairs which climbed in a steep spiral into the bedroom, a circular, cavernous bread-oven, relic of gentler days.

For fifty years labourers' families had come and gone in the house with the range; in the old people's cottage there had been no change in that time. The old man was a romantic, a lover of the antique. He took what seemed to his wife a perverse and unnatural pride in their hovel. He gloated upon its possible age, upon its worn and uneven stone floors, which she would have had mended with concrete, upon the obscure lights of its little leaded windows, which she would have replaced with big panes, most of all upon the bread oven, which she would so gladly have bricked up at the very beginning.

An iron range, which, like its twin in the other cottage, the farmer had brought up the bank to them when they first moved in, a sort of bridal present to them, a token of his good will and intentions, had lain for years rusting in the wash-house. The old man would not, in spite of her entreaties, her nagging, even on occasion her tears, instal it. In fact, if he had had his own way, she would not only have made his stew on the hod; but, crawling in to lay the wood fire, and later raking the embers out on to the hearth when the cavern was hot enough, she would have baked his bread in the ancient oven in the ancient excellent way. But there was a point beyond which for years neither pushed the other. The range lay in its rust upon the wash-house floor; they had their bread from the shop.

For fifty years the old woman built their fire on the ashes of a primitive hearth, and bore with the smoke (which every gale blew back down the chimney's wide and antique throat upon the lace curtains and papered walls of a more decorated time than that for which it was designed). For fifty years she blushed with rage, while her husband trained roses over their door and enticed the wide-eyed summer visitor, walking on the hills in search of just such rural sights, into the room to admire the oven, her black beast, the shadow upon her life. She watched the old man gaze with love on the thing for all those years; and nothing was changed. But change, when it is longest resisted, comes violently at last.

In the seventieth year of his life, during a brief interval in the tenancy of the cottage with the range, the old man suddenly disappeared. On Saturday morning as usual his wife came into the village to collect her pension and to do the shopping, alone. To their inquiries she answered that they had quarrelled, and that he had left her. It was

unimaginable. In twenty minutes everyone knew, and had exclaimed upon the phenomenon. Incredulity was expressed on every side, but without conviction or any real speculation upon an alternative to the story, unlikely as it was.

Because she had lived there for longer than anyone remembered, no one was surprised to see the old woman start for home again as soon as the shopping was done. She pottered for a while on the parish dump on her way back, as usual, and picked up a few sticks from the common for the fire.

Two days later she went down to the farm where they had both worked. She asked to borrow the horse used in the milk float, for the afternoon, 'to get a little wood in against the bad weather.' The farmer observed that the old man had evidently not returned. He let her take the horse. Next day the oil-man, who took her little tin of paraffin down the fields to her from the lane at the top, before driving round to the farm, reported that the washhouse in which they had been accustomed to store their wood was lying in ruins. She was using the bricks for something. The oil-man, who was a great gossip and took enormous interest in all the topics of the district, reckoned that she was bricking up her oven at last.

There were few casual visitors to the cottages on the bank. The village was delighted, therefore, when new tenants were found for the other little house almost immediately, and reports could be expected. By the end of the week it was known that the old woman was indeed engaged upon some major operation upon her fireplace, carrying in twos and threes on an old tin tray, bricks from the demolished washhouse around the corner and indoors, mixing cement in the copper, happy as a sandboy.

There was no one in the village who was not pleased to think that the poor old woman, after such a long trial, should at last be achieving her ambition and her heart's desire; all the same there were one or two who wondered how she could be so confident that her husband, so shortly vanished, might not suddenly and quite as shortly return.

The oil-man, who besides having a natural interest in any sort of romantic situation, was deeply struck by the possible poetic implication of the old woman's activity. What if she were not only correcting the frustrations of a lifetime, but at the same time executing a sort of picturesque justice upon their author? What if the old man who had so loved the famous oven, should, by her hand, find at last a fitting tomb in its very heart? The idea was fascinating.

Once an idea, bizarre and romantic, finds a niche in the hearts of simple men and women, it does not take much evidence by way of corroboration to convince them of its truth. The bricks from the washhouse were nearly half exhausted, and the old woman's work was on the point of completion, when suddenly a report was received from the cottage with the range which transformed a mere speculation into a practical certainty. A smell had become apparent. A dreadful, sinister smell, growing worse each hour, and seeming to descend, mingled horribly with the smoke of the first fire in the new grate, crept with the rumours of the villagers into the very hearts of the old woman's neighbours.

The police were informed. From the next village, two constables who had grown, man and boy, from among these very folk, one rosy and the other waxy pale, were sent to investigate the matter. They visited the old woman, called her 'mother' and bullied her a little about why she had not reported the disappearance to them in the first place. They smelt, unmistakably, the smell.

The police sent to the village for a builder's mate. Half the village came back with him, men and women sheepishly, on the pretext of seeing that there was fair play, children in wild excitement as if on holiday. The few who could get into the little room looked first at the fireplace.

Under the huge, ancient beam, black with smoke, the bricks shone rosy bright. The yawning opening had been reduced by half its length, and except for the new, sloping narrow channel into the flue, by half its depth as well. The space remaining had been neatly filled by the range, polished now to a jet-like intensity of

gleaming blackness, cradling in its ashy heart, eighteen inches off the stones, the coals of a slumbering fire. An iron stave supported the arch of bricks forming the new brow of the mantel, under the great beam. The old woman had done a loving job, rehearsed so often perhaps in her mind that there had been no unexpected difficulties for her in the unaccustomed work. The builder's mate gave a grunt of approval.

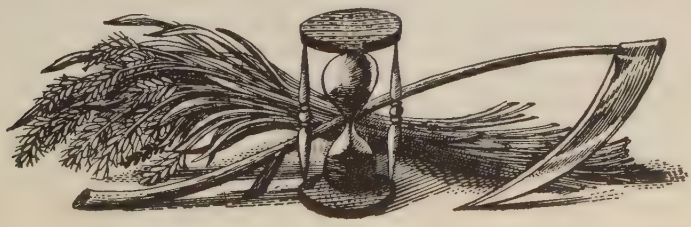
They took the old woman outside and walked her up and down while they undid her work. It seemed to take a very long time. It grew dusk; they took her into the house with the range and gave her tea. The women waited with her, but she seemed not to notice them, her eyes fixed with a certain satisfaction at last upon the other range.

Finally they pulled down the last barrier. She had built solidly and sound from well inside the oven's mouth out to the hearth. They had a pile of bricks inside the room almost as big as the pile still lying at the end of the house from which she had selected them. Their eyes followed the anxious beams of their torches. The rosy policeman was pale; the cheeks of the waxy policeman burned with hectic colour. The oven was quite empty.

They could not, of course, apologise to the old woman sufficiently for what they had suspected, or for what they had done. They apologised nevertheless to the best of their ability. There was great indignation. Everyone said that the whole incident had been quite inexcusable. Both policemen were very angry with the parishoners responsible for calling them. The rosy one volunteered to see that the whole work was restored then and there; the pale one offered to stay and supervise the job himself. Patiently the old woman declined. Her polite inflexibility, and the calm resignation with which she so obviously waited for them all to go, filled them with respect and increased their painful embarrassment. They were all delighted to get away.

She began work again with her own hands next day. At the same time, the smell, which had been the immediate cause of all the trouble, disappeared completely, and of course no one ever referred to it to the old woman. People were only too glad to avoid the whole subject when speaking to her. All the same, one or two thought about that smell quite a lot. After all was said and done, the old man was never to be heard from, or heard of, again. It might have been claimed by anyone with a tendency towards scientific method of thought and investigation that, when a body is to be looked for, it might as well be looked for in more places than one. The oil-man, to mention one of these, was heard to suggest that a really clever old woman, having borrowed a horse to pull down a wash-house, might be credited with the sense to hide anything she had a mind to, under the demolished building, until search in another direction had cleared the final hiding-place from suspicion. The oil-man knew for a fact that these old ovens had no separate flues, which would account for the disappearance of the smell (once anything smelly was safely plugged up inside).

These ideas, however, were never unfolded to the police. And if the rosy constable and the pale one from the next village were ever troubled by similar thoughts themselves, these were never communicated to anyone else, so far as anyone knows.



'We are all of us lighting effects'

MEDARDO ROSSO

P. M. FITZGERALD

ITALIAN sculpture is probably the most interesting in Europe today, but it is difficult to understand it without first studying the work of Medardo Rosso.[1] When the Rosso exhibit attracted so much attention at the *Biennale* last year, I hoped that some articles would appear about him in English magazines, but none did. I attribute this partly to the great heat which we are told made it very exhausting to visit the exhibition, and partly to the unspoken convention which prevents critics from writing about anything which they did not study in their art school days or which is not shown from time to time in the London galleries. There is also the irrelevant consideration that Rosso's son was a great admirer of Mussolini: as a result of this, there is a very well lighted *Sala Rosso* in the unvisited wastes of the Modern Art Museum in Rome and here some of his most famous work can be seen.

There are many people alive today who knew Rosso well, but his life has already acquired a mythical and operatic air. He was one of those fortunate people who are able to arrange life according to their own inner theatrical sense of what is fitting for them and who create themselves in their own image. Medardo Rosso was born in Turin in 1858. His father was a railway official who had risen to be station-master of Turin and who took part in the Garibaldi expedition, being rewarded with a gold watch by King Victor Emanuele. He was anxious for his son to follow in his footsteps and to take a comfortable job in the railways, but Medardo, from the first a boy of terrifyingly strong will, when the family transferred to Milan, attached himself to an obscure monumental mason who taught him to handle a chisel and hammer. He returned every evening to supper, having 'missed school', with his jacket covered with clay, and it is fair to assume that he enjoyed the rows which broke out over the supper table. His military service (he had to serve instead of his brother, which annoyed him exceedingly) was a period of wild dissatisfaction and disgrace, and when he left the army, at the age of twenty-three, his father allowed him to enrol as a student at the Brera. The syllabus of the Brera at that time consisted entirely of formal drawing and the reproduction of classical statues in gesso, and Rosso at once appears at the head of a band of students demanding models from the life. The authorities paid no attention, and shortly afterwards Rosso, who had knocked down a student who refused to sign the petition, was expelled. It was at this time, however, that he had the authentic moment of vision which was to decide his career. He was on a casual visit to an exhibition of pictures. The experience is described by his intimate friend, Ardengo Soffici:

'I was walking round the gallery, not very impressed by what I saw. I turned from the hundreds of figures hanging on the walls, and looked at the other visitors. It suddenly struck me that there was no resemblance at all between what I now saw and what I had just been looking at. In the pictures, all those figures of saints, heroes, and nymphs and old worthies had an artificial look, as if they were on a stage or in another world where light, colour and form never changed and there were no sudden effects, where the human body had always the same rounded clarity, the same plastic regularity, where the faces invariably had two eyes, a nose and a mouth where you would expect them, the hands had five fingers and the draperies always fell in their natural and recognisable folds. It was a very different state of affairs when I looked at reality. The

[1] This is particularly true of the work of Giacomo Manzu

faces had none of the conventional colour of the pictures. And they, and the whole body, appeared squashed, deformed, twisted, or obliterated, according to the play of light and shade.

'The face of a woman was a dark blob over a light base; it was sketch drawn accurately or roughly depending on where the light came from. The legs of the men appeared to be black pillars sunk in a shining floor which reflected the light into my eyes; while the shadows thrown by the various groups looked like dark abysses opening before them. Everything, however bodies, limbs and clothes—formed one large symbol, shifting in tone as the people moved one way or another. But if this is reality, I asked myself, why have "they" always done something entirely different, and why have they paid no attention to such an interesting aspect of things? Is their art the true art? If it is, then nature is useless to art; and in that case why do they hold themselves out as representing nature?'

This could hardly be bettered as a description of a run-of-the-mill exhibition in 1880. From this moment Rosso devoted himself to open warfare against the academicians, to the interpretation of light and to his own theories of sculpture: his first fully impressionistic works, the 'Street Singer' and 'Lovers under the Lamplight' are dated 1882, and it should be emphasised that in 1882 he had never been to Paris and had never had the opportunity to see a Manet, a Degas or a Renoir. He was, in fact, living in Rome and sleeping under the arches of the Colosseum, and although, during a stay in Milan, his circumstances seem to have been rather better, he still had to escape from the tradesmen in a cart hidden under a pile of canvases.

At the end of the year Rosso was thrown into a state of dumb stupor by the news of his mothers death; throughout his life he was liable to these periods of inactivity which paralysed and dismayed the friends who were accustomed to warm themselves at the fire of his personality. In 1884, however, his recovery was marked by an exhibition arranged for him in Paris, and true to his compulsion to provide Italy with a great Bohemian, he arrived with only twenty-seven lire and a return ticket in his pocket. He found a cheap pension where he was allowed to set up a studio in a coachhouse and where he burnt the few remaining pieces of furniture to fire his clay models. He had to wait for the last illicit couple to leave the pension before he had a chance to wash. There were good times when a work was sold; the mattress came out of pawn and Rosso took out of a suitcase his jealously-hoarded Milanese Sunday suit, which he wore only on prosperous days, but his legend in the 80's is of black poverty which was redeemed only by his charm and force of character. It was in this penniless state that he called on Rodin, who held a kind of democratic court for young sculptors, and in a long stream of explosive speech 'converted' him to Impressionism. I do not know whether Rodin ever acknowledged this debt, but it is often suggested that the 'Balzac' (1898) was a direct result of Rosso's influence. Meanwhile Rosso was exhibiting at the *Salon des Indépendants* (presumably that of 1884 since there was none in 1885) and the choice now lay before him to continue as a French artist in the intoxicating air of Paris or to return to stuffy, wealthy, indifferent, middle-class Milan. This choice was very important, and Rosso's decision has confirmed him as *italianissimo* and as a potent influence on the modern art of Italy. He went back to Milan, married there, and when he went to the Registrar to record the birth of his son, tried to enter him under the name of Francesco Evviva Ribelle (Francesco Up the Rebels).

I do not know what Rosso learned from his visit to Paris. In a sense, he had nothing to learn (although Seurat, in 1885, was just beginning his classic experiment) since his mind was reserved and sealed off from the first for one theory which he drove with the effectiveness of a bull-dozer. He burst upon the consciousness of Milan during a very well chosen moment—it was an open competition for a funeral monument. Monumental sculpture, always of tremendous importance in Italy, and above all, important in Milan, had reached mammoth proportions at the turn

of the century when a forest of white marble rose against the blue sky of the *campi santi*, backed by rows of locked mausoleums with glimpses, through *nouveau art* stained glass, of coffins in their shelves. The municipal authorities added to the crowded rows of winged and beckoning figures[1] by erecting statues to dead citizens, and these statues were usually chosen by open competition. The subject in 1885 was a monument to the Wagnerian critic Filippo Filippi, but while the jury were still discussing the conditions of entry, Rosso completed his bust and erected it on the grave in the Monumentale. The authorities simply played into his hands by protesting about this: Rosso's answer was 'I haven't asked you to pay me, have I? He was my friend and my monument is worthy of him.'

In this year 1886 the authentic seal was put upon Rosso's career as an artist of the *avant-garde*, when one of his bronzes was bought by Emile Zola. He began to make a stir and was pointed out in cafés where he sat bearded, stout, expansive, impatient, respectably dressed, his voice unmistakably loud and rough with the dialect he retained to his dying day. Most of the discussions would end with his famous phrases, 'We are all of us nothing but lighting effects'—'nothing in space is material.' In defence of his own theories he has adopted views of a grand simplicity on the history of art. Although his taste in painting was that of a true professional (he was drawn especially to Chardin and El Greco) he pretended, at least, to make light of Michelangelo and dismissed the entire sculpture of the seventeenth century as 'paperweights'.[2]

Meanwhile he extended his tactics over the Filippi monument to a kind of all-out warfare with all who opposed him. Surrounded by his henchmen (who included, in the 90's, the painter Carlo Carrà), he would march into galleries and plant his rejected statues defiantly among the official exhibits. According to one story he put a wax model of his next to Michelangelo's 'Prisoner' in Florence 'for the purposes of comparison'. Sometimes the authorities fought back, but their resistance was becoming enfeebled. They would leave his name out of the catalogue, or say that his entries had arrived too late. But his successes in London,[3] New York and Paris (he was usually the only Italian exhibitor alongside Sisley, Monet, Pissarro) battered at the doors of self-sufficient Milan. They had, in the end, to recognise 'Il Nostro', who certainly had the last word when he forced the Exhibition of Sacred Art (Venice 1920) to accept his bust of little Baron Rothschild:

'They thought it a joke. But it wasn't! Jesus was a Hebrew child. Why do they go on persecuting the Jews in the name of the most innocent Jewish child of them all?'

Rosso's story from the 90's onwards was one of growing fame—a new studio in Paris, telegrams from Duse, the welcome praise of Degas, a bewildering number of exhibitions—until the curtain fell at the Asilo Evangelico at Milan in the spring of 1928. Rosso, who was seventy years old, had been taken there with diabetes and a malignant growth on the foot; his leg was amputated and the doctors said they were 'quite sure' he would be able to return to Paris. After they had left the room, the old man turned to his son: *Hinn tucc sicur 'sti professôr . . . domà mi quand lavoravi gh'avevi paura; e tanta!*' ('They're all "quite sure" these medical gentlemen! And yet all the time I was working I was frightened, and how!')

★ ★ ★

The triumph of the impressionist movement and, of course, of Rodin, made Rosso's acceptance easier in his lifetime, but has obscured him from view today. It is much to his credit that, though he often lost his temper, it never occurred to him to be angry that his sensation had been stolen; perhaps, indeed, he never knew that he had been eclipsed.

Rosso is, in fact, one of the great innovators; not (like Fortuny and Gustave Moreau) a man who did not quite dare to put his new theories into practice but succeeded in passing them on to the next generation, but an innovator pure and simple. I have called his attempt 'grand', and so it was: he was an artist in the grand manner. His extravagant views on the history of sculpture, for instance, were really the healthy instinct of a revolutionary who must always be committed to

[1] In France, Bartholomé's Monument to the Dead in Père Lachaise (1899) excited amazement because of its 'twenty magnificently modelled figures, *none of them winged*' [2] The victory of Samothrace was also a paperweight. But there is an uncomfortable truth in one of Rosso's sayings: 'Many statues appear beautiful through the operation of Time. *Time is the best patron of all*' [3] His first London showing was at the Goupil Galleries, with a collection of Madox Brown and the Pre-Raphaelites in 1896

injustice. Even his ferocious quarrel with Rodin, after their earlier amity and exchange of gifts,[1] was on the giant scale, as though weighty fragments of stone and bronze were moving through the air. It must never be forgotten that, when he began his revolutionary career, there was *no* repertoire of forms in Italian sculpture except those of the later Canova.

If you look at the 'Allegory of Sculpture' at the Academy of S. Luca by Adolfo Apolloni ('a beautiful nude female figure symbolises the artist, and beneath her hands there begin to emerge the arms and hands of a male figure created from the block of marble on which she is seated'), you will have a fairly good glimpse of academic sculpture as Rosso found it.

It is important, too, to remember that the nineteenth-century Italian public had not been prepared for Impressionism—let down gently, as from the history of art they should have been—by a period of 'realism'. Realism should lay about and stun people into submission for more bizarre experiments, but in 1882 Meunier (and his disciple Bazarro) had not yet got under way with their 'Hammermen', 'Puddlers', 'Pit Ponies' and 'Miners Attacked by Firedamp'. There is small wonder, then, that Rosso's devoted friends looked on him as unique, and were jealous after his death of the slightest infringement of his artistic rights.

There is nothing at all difficult to grasp, either in Rosso's theories or in his application of them. Baudelaire had said that sculpture is an inferior art because it is powerless to reproduce atmosphere, *ambience*, movement and light. Leonardo was of the same opinion. Rosso, without having seen any of the early work of Manet or Renoir and long before Rodin turned to Impressionism, determined to make the grand attempt to render the effects of light and its fleeting appearances through the medium of solid sculpture. It was, in fact, classic Impressionism; and I should class Rosso with Renoir in the sense that he hit on a new language, which had nothing to do with photography, in which to express it.

Paint is capable of an infinite number of illusions, but the solidity of sculpture is awkward to get round. Rosso was not dismayed by this, having, as he said, '*la facilita dell' impossibile*'. His first method was to convey by apparent roughness of modelling the dark caverns of the eyes, the hollows of the cheeks and the creases of the clothes (which fascinated him always so that he frightened by the violence of his abuse a critic who praised his nudes—'Poof! I don't do nudes'). The aim was, as might be expected, to banish the idea of the imprisoned form springing from the marble and to suggest instead the lightest touches passing across the surface and conjuring it into life. (This is romantic language, but Rosso was romantic.)

It must have been very irritating for Rosso to hear this early work of his described as 'Studies after Rodin' and himself (this became a commonplace) as 'a painter without paintbrushes'. As to this last criticism, it is significant that Rosso's great moment of vision came to him when he was looking at pictures, not sculpture; and there was always the possibility that he was attempting something outside the range of sculpture altogether. His reply was, as usual, that 'there is no such thing as painting or sculpture, but only light.'

In his next phrase there are characteristic distortions of the figure reflecting the inner compulsion of the artist; the features verge on caricature and the subtle manipulation of planes of light and shade give almost the effect of colour: frequently the form emerges from the mass of unsculptured wax or bronze. It was this invention (which we associate with Rodin) that his imitators seized upon mercilessly so that in every big *campo santo* arms are gesticulating and springing in all directions out of rough-hewn masonry.

Working in this style, Rosso produced his famous 'Woman with a Veil', his masterpiece, which disarms criticism by its magic touch and by the combination of the mushroom hat of the early 80's with the enigmatic smile of a Leonardo. He described this 'as a feminine physiognomy, seen in the fugitive space of the fraction of a second, but caught just as I saw it'—saw it, that is, in the dusk of the Paris Boulevard, *l'heure bleue*, '*O toi que j'eusse aimé, Ô toi qui le savais.*'

[1] Rodin offered a torso in exchange for one of the Rosso's series of Laughing Women, the *Donna ridente* of 1890

At this time, too, he began his incomparable series of child portraits which include the 'Baby in Sunshine' and 'Baby at the Free Restaurant', where the squat face looks out from under the enveloping shawl with a matchless expression of timidity and greed, while the mouth, full of bread, is indicated by a masterly smudge Later still his theories were pushed to extremes and in the 'Impressions of the Boulevard' idea and form seem to have almost parted company.

His last work, the 'Ecce Puer', is on Rosso's own tomb in the Monumentale, and any reader of this article who is passing through Milan may, perhaps, be interested enough to go and see it for himself.

But the first effect of an exhibition of Rosso's work is the electric touch of strong emotion. Don't let us be afraid of it—don't let us be persuaded that it is 'literary', for puritanism, never to be killed, has reappeared among critics today in this deadliest of all forms. Don't let us hold our noses if Rosso shows 'a woman of the people' snatching a kiss before the last spadeful of earth covers her husband's corpse, or a sick child in hospital whose pathos we may like to think is easy. Pathos, indeed, is the keynote of the Impressionist Movement, as morbidity is of the Pre-Raphaelites. It is implicit in the very idea of the moment that will not return; and under their concern for light, the great practitioners were drawn to it in their choice of subjects, prostitutes, little girls in their Sunday best, the doleful eccentric in the corner of the café, the backstage of the theatre, the aching brightness of the long summer afternoon.

It is not by coincidence that both Rosso and Renoir set themselves to render, with miraculous success, the rubbery, puppy-like, irresistible faces of childhood. Both of them perceived the stubborn determination to get its own way that lay under the peach-bloom contours; both of them were masculine and were drawn to the tender, but, above all, both of them understood that in women and children they could study not only the appearances but also the tragedy of light which will betray minute by minute the terrible altering, foreshadowing and falling away of flesh.

Although Rosso was an artist of considerable strength, he did not achieve that 'monumentality' which many of us consider the great Italian contribution to European art. He had put that aside with all that, to his genial fanatic's mind, savoured of paper-weightishness. But as to that other Italian characteristic, the creation of pure beauty, I would give him credit there, when all the novelty of his experiment has been forgotten. But the future must judge.

Notes to Illustrations

Copies, by Rosso himself, and other versions of the works I have mentioned or chosen for illustration here can be found in collections all over Europe.

Il Bacio Sulla Tomba—1882 *Destroyed by the Town Council of Milan*

'A woman of the people stretched out on her husband's grave gives the last kiss before the coffin is covered'

Below

Impressione d'Omnibus—1884

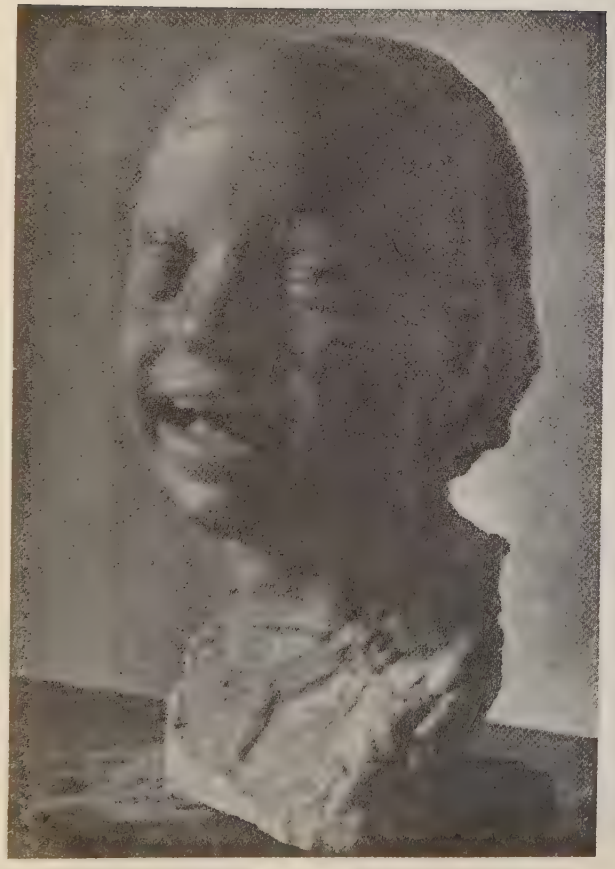
Studied from a group of people who sat opposite Rosso nearly every morning in the horse bus on the way to the studio. Degas said of this work: 'Mais ça c'est de la peinture; c'est magnifique', thus indicating the weakness and strength of the method. Only a few photographs remain of this work, which was broken to pieces on the way to the Biennale at Venice in 1886

L'Eta d'Oro—1886 *Original in Museo di Barzio*

The models were Rosso's own wife and son

Donna Ridente—1890 *Original at Museo di Barzio*

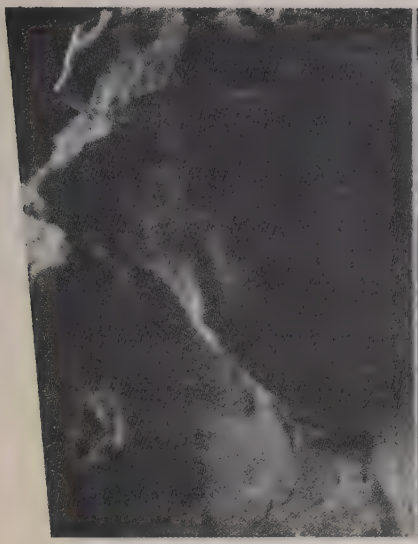
This was the work which Rodin offered to exchange for his Torso. *It is one of a series of* Smiling Women *and is studied from a music-hall artiste Bianca Gaririglia*

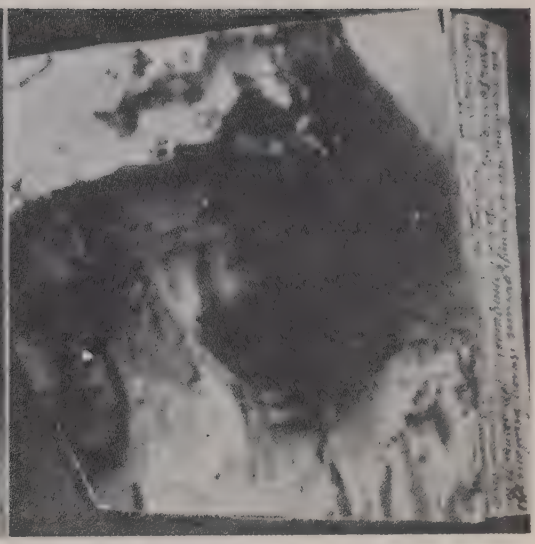


Bimba Ridente—1890

Bimbo Al Sole—1892

Originals in Museo di Barzio





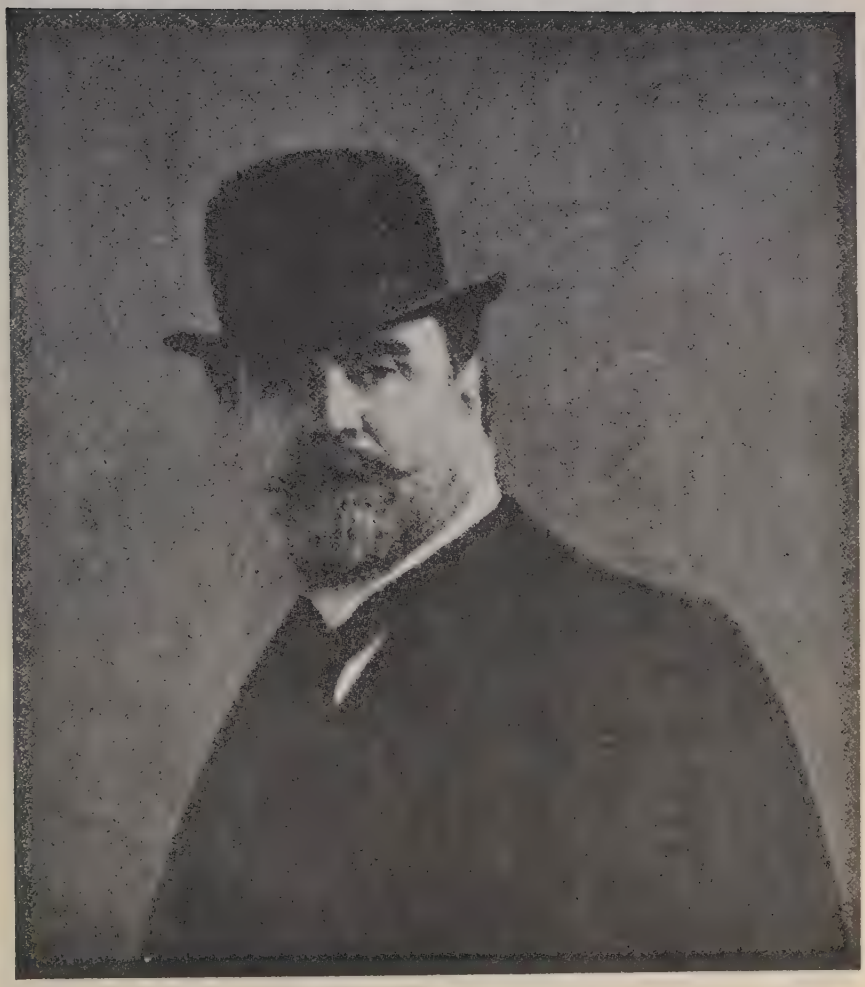
Dama Della Veletta—1893

Original in the Museo di Barzio

In Rosso's stilo sfumato, *a magical impression that seems on the shadowy borderline of the entrance to life*

Parigi di Notte (*Impressione di boulevard*)—*1895*

The original has disappeared. The figures are 'either dancers or hurrying passers-by'. The most extraordinary of all Rosso's works, an attempt to render shadow by substance



Medardo Rosso in 1910

The Thames at Twickenham

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THE THAMES AT TWICKENHAM

RICHARD WILSON 1714–1782

FEW things have a more persistent hold on life than a legend that is demonstrably untrue. The legend long persisted that Wilson only turned from portraiture to landscape after he went to Italy and on the advice of Zuccarelli—an unlikely story on the face of it, even if the superb landscapes he painted before he went to Italy did not exist. And the legend that he became hopelessly 'Italianised' by his stay in Italy still goes on. 'His "Thames at Twickenham",' says a contemporary writer, 'is a Roman landscape in English dress.' It is not perhaps easy to envisage a Roman landscape in English dress, but it is easy to recognise an English landscape. The Thames at Twickenham has changed in detail, but not in character, since Wilson's time, and it is strikingly like Wilson's picture. I was there the other day, and it seemed to me that he had distilled the very essence of the scene.

The truth is that Wilson painted both Italian landscape and English landscape with extraordinary justness of observation. And if Wales may for this purpose be included in England, then he was as English as Constable or Crome, and more various than either. Of course he liked a romantic scene. Even if the opportunity had existed in his day, we may be sure that he would never have painted a goods-yard or a view in the Underground. He painted much among mountains and alongside rivers; he painted picturesque castles; but he also painted homelier scenes with a sensitive eye and the most intimate understanding. In spite of his restricted palette, or perhaps because of it, his colour is so true as to make the work of most landscape painters seem a piece of superficial observation. He saw the scene as a whole, and its features are not more important than the space and air in which they are enveloped. He was a master of technical method. He knew exactly the right foundation on which he could overlay his final colour; the right cool-blue which, when superimposed with yellow, would express the glowing evening skies of which he was so fond. He knew the right, rather neutral, green with which to model the line of trees on the further bank of 'The Thames at Twickenham', and the right warm glaze to put those trees exactly in their place, so that you can positively breathe the air between them and the strongly emphasised foreground tree. And he knew the very nature of pigment, and how to contrast fat, luscious touches such as may be noted on this tree, on the two figures, and on the light-tipped edges of the clouds, with the suave surface of the water beyond. Water plays an important part in Wilson's pictures. It is rarely missing from them, and his treatment of it is masterly. His use of water to bring the light of the sky right through the landscape contributes greatly to the feeling of space and air he so wonderfully conveys, and his judgment of the relationship between the sky and its reflection in the water is so unerring that occasionally, in his smaller works, he can make it the real subject of his picture.

Richard Muther in his ambitious work *The History of Painting*, refers to him briefly as the 'imitator of Claude Lorrain'. Five words, no more, and those mistaken.

ON CHOOSING BOOKS FOR A HOLIDAY

IAIN HAMILTON

SHALL we begin with a little scene?

Very well, then. Let us assume that the tickets are bought, that he has not forgotten to put his passport in his pocket, that his luggage is standing ready, and that he is about to find a taxi. Perhaps it is only now that he—this serious-minded person who diligently ploughs, for pleasure or for profit or for both, how many thousand acres of print a year—perhaps it is only at this late hour that he realises that he has not looked to the business of reading-matter for the weeks that lie ahead. Quick: what is he holding in his hand? A new novel: 257 pages of thinnish matter: this will be devoured and the husk cast aside in no time at all. What's in his mackintosh pocket? A good, and thick, anthology of verse. Fine. But the truth is that no anthology of verse, however excellent, can fail to irritate by the particular nature of its inclusions and omissions after really prolonged acquaintance (unless one has compiled it oneself). It is not the sort of book to be locked up alone with for a long time. Anything else? Anything in the case? Shirts and socks and sandals and what not, but never a book. O misery! O panic!—for there will be neither time nor opportunity to buy anything, and he knows that the one and only book in the mountain village where he is to spend the next three weeks is, of all curious things, a furniture catalogue left behind many years ago by a Georgian poet who went abroad to decide whether or not he should marry. There remains, however, just time to go to the book-shelves indoors and select—how many books? The case is bulging and will take nothing extra. The right-hand pocket of the mackintosh will accept one, and he can carry three in addition to the novel. Three books for three idle weeks, not counting the anthology (which he will swig at, rather, taking occasional drams) and the new novel (which will be as dead as the dodo long before he reaches his destination).

There's a fine test for a dilatory creature like one's self. Of course, there are those well-ordered people who always arrange everything down to the last detail. Long, long before the day of departure they have seen to this tiresome matter of reading: new books have been bought or borrowed, and others have been judiciously selected from the book-shelves. Those books which will not under any circumstances be required on the journey are stowed away at the bottom of cases, on top of shirts, collars, and underwear, and beneath socks, ties, pullovers, and the like; books which may *possibly* be needed are placed handily on top of all; and books which will certainly be opened on train, plane, or ship, are set aside to be picked up and carried or stuck into pockets. This is a serious matter, and this, indeed, is how it should be ordered—for neglect and confusion can give rise to dreadful irritation. Happy are the sane and sensible ones who ask themselves with plenty of time to spare, 'What books shall I take?', who have the power of decision, and who act upon their decision.

Speaking for myself, I must confess to a woeful inability to bring myself to consider the question at all before it is almost too late. But now that I am writing on the subject with all due consideration, I can perfectly easily pause and ask myself what I shall take when I depart in a week or two. And I can answer quickly. I shall be accompanied on holiday by Proust, Elizabeth Bowen, Sir Kenneth Clark, Gide, Yeats, Shakespeare, Rilke, Sterne . . .

But stop! Here's almost a crateful already. This is absurd. How shall I carry all this? How can I read all this in three

weeks? Ah, of course I can't read all this, but that is just the point. For it is essential always to take far more than one can reasonably expect to read. How monstrous to come to the last line of the last page of the last book with a couple of hundred hours still ahead! Do you recall, in his book about travels in Mexico, Graham Greene's account of how he rationed out his Trollope, a charming author to read in such a ridiculously un-English country as Mexico, page by page? It is essential to have reserves, and to have reserves for the reserves. It is essential, in fact, to have a little library, for how does one know how one will feel on any given day? Even if one intends to do little more than remain immobile and supine in a deck-chair in the sunshine, it is necessary to have the comforting knowledge that immensely wide tracts of print remain unexplored or wait to be explored afresh. It is almost impossible (for some it is quite impossible) to sit and doze at one's ease in a deck-chair unless there is a book (open or shut or uncut, no matter) lying in one's lap. For this is the talisman against boredom, ennui, regret, remorse, melancholia, *Angst*, general irritation, depression, indigestion, and the fidgets. Any old book, to speak truly, although the better the book lying there, the more profound one's peace of mind. It is shocking, but true, that so many of us sink into such a desperate addiction to print that life is quite insupportable in any circumstances without a quantity of it immediately at hand, if not actually in the hand. If the worst comes to the worst, a telephone directory will do. A man whose intellectual attainments I greatly respect has been known to devour with avidity page after page of a telephone directory while kept waiting somewhere in a room without so much as a glossy magazine full of inane and horse-like faces. Also, I am acquainted with a journalist in Fleet Street who never goes anywhere, even in London, without at least four books. Every day they are different. Certainly, I have never seen him look at them, so perhaps they are only review copies which he is going off to sell.

But these are extreme cases and they have no direct bearing on the matter in hand. I have already taken the first step towards making a list of the books which I shall take with me on holiday. Looking at the list of authors so far made out, I am driven to recognise that it is, in fact, just a little absurd. Instead of starting again now at the point where I left off, I should like to say what my typical custom is.

I find myself, like the actor in the little scene above, unprepared; so I go off to the bookshelves and, hating to exercise my will, let my unconscious guide my hand. My hand invariably picks out *Ulysses*, a somewhat weighty volume, as you know. Its sheer bulk no doubt has something to do with it: with so many pages, one will never be stuck. In fact, however, there is a sounder reason: *Ulysses* I have read a number of times, but never have I begun at the beginning and ended at the end, proceeding in an orderly, proper, and completely natural fashion from Page One to Page Two, and so on, until the whole enormous epic has unfolded itself in the way intended by the author. It has long been an ambition of mine to start reading the book at

'Stately, plump Buck Mulligan came from the stairhead . . . ' and stop reading it at

' . . . yes I said yes I will Yes.'

But it looks as if this is to remain an ambition for some time. For I have never yet opened my copy of *Ulysses* on holiday. No doubt its mere presence has been comforting.

Well, having put this heavy volume under my arm, my hand returns to the shelves and is apt to pick out Conrad's *Mirror of the Sea*, a book light in weight and convenient for the pocket. I am glad to tell you that this book does not share the same holiday fate as *Ulysses*—it is always opened; a page or two is always read. Indeed, this is a book I read only when on holiday.

The hand also is liable to select the collected poems of Yeats, a thing that it has been doing for rather a long time; now, this will lie by my bedside and I shall read a poem or two every night until sleep comes dropping slow.

You may observe that I am thoroughly conservative in my choice; these three books I have long known inside out; my hand is most unwilling to pick out a book

which I have not yet read. But I usually take more than three. The Everyman selection of D. H. Lawrence's stories, poems, and essays, is almost a certainty as well; *The Faerie Queene*, curiously enough (or is it so curious, to take this most lulling of works?); either *Jacob's Room* or *The Waves*—the beginning of the method and the end, the alpha and omega of Mrs. Woolf; and one of Dostoievsky's novels. Somehow or other, tied in a strap perhaps, these books are usually taken, even if I am only going to Chichester for the week-end.

I am driven, then, to the conclusion that if I am a normal person, the normal person is inclined to be conservative in this matter. (The fact that I am certain not to read *Ulysses* and most unlikely to read any of the others at length—borrowing, instead, or even buying, other books as soon as I reach my destination—has nothing to do with it. After all, I do not take these books with the intention of *not* reading them.) One starts off at any rate with the idea of pleasantly consolidating, rather than of venturing into new territory and so enlarging one's experience.

However, in order to drive my wayward thoughts towards some definite and clear-cut decision (how agonising with all the varied wealth of countless rich imaginations lying compactly between so many covers), I set myself this question: if I were leaving tomorrow to spend a holiday in some bookless place, and if my luggage had room for no more than three books (ancient or modern, no matter), what would my choice be? But first—I set some other people the same question. I am pleased to tell you that John Gielgud's choice is conservative enough: the complete works of Shakespeare, an omnibus of short stories, and *War and Peace*. (Not that there is never any new ground to be explored in Shakespeare, even by Mr. Gielgud.) Cecil Day Lewis's selection one might also describe as conservative: the collected poems of Thomas Hardy, the select tales of Chekhov, and *Middlemarch*. Mr. Day Lewis explains his choice by saying that he can never read the first two too often, and that the third is one of the great books which he has never yet been able to appreciate as he should. I ventured also to drop a line to Mr. Harry Pollitt, Secretary of our own Communist Party, to inquire what his selection would be. But very properly he pointed out that he finds it impossible to answer such hypothetical questions. No doubt he would find the choice quite easy when he came to the point of making it. The answer which impressed me most of all was Mr. David Low's. How long was the holiday to be? he asked. If a matter of not more than three months, he says, he would take no books at all—not counting three blank notebooks; for 'at my age I should use the period not for absorbing at second-hand more of the thoughts of others but for quiet reflection, putting my own thoughts in order so far as I could.' There is much sense here, for it is true enough that too much of our reading is done, if without conscious intent, only to keep the world at bay, or to keep ourselves from ourselves (as one does by reading a telephone directory when there is nothing better). But three months! Mr. Low can contemplate calmly the prospect of being alone with himself for three months. He has come to terms with himself better than those of us for whom a really good look at oneself is like meeting Medusa's eye.

Am I still being evasive? What, seriously, shall I take? Alas, I know only too well. I shall take *Ulysses*, the *Mirror of the Sea*, and the collected poems of William Butler Yeats. If my destination is really to be bookless, then I shall have to re-read them from cover to cover in orderly fashion—and re-read them again.

and yes I said yes I will Yes.

Or take up climbing, or botany, or sun-bathing?

6

NEW BOOKS

BE NOT AFRAID

By Emmanuel Mounier. Translated by Cynthia Rowland, with a Foreword by Leslie Paul. *Rockliff.* 15s.

Reviewed by John Cocking

Emmanuel Mounier founded his review, *Esprit*, in 1932 to continue the work of Péguy's *Cahiers de la Quinzaine*, and it became the centre of the movement known as 'Personalism'. *Be Not Afraid* includes translations of two works: 'La Petite Peur du XXe siècle' (1948) and 'Qu'est-ce que le personnalisme?' (1947). The later of the two is printed first, no doubt because it is more dramatically conceived, more breathlessly concerned with the most recent phase of crisis, more tumultuously uplifted by Mounier's sense of the power and the glory; the second is quieter, more reflective—an attempt to define personalism directly, and indirectly by way of criticising other philosophies.

Personalism is 'a total effort to comprehend and outgrow the whole crisis of twentieth-century man.' The crisis itself is due to 'the massive and almost contemporaneous breakdown of the two great religions of the modern world: Christianity and Rationalism.' Christianity and Rationalism are involved in the same moral failure; the first because it is contaminated with the metaphysically unrealistic optimism of the second, an optimism 'to which, either during the Counter-Reformation or in the two centuries of liberalism, Christianity lost as much of its substance as it ever did to Jansenism.' The only true progress for the Christian is 'the progress of God's design for the universe', and this design can only be carried out by men acting in freedom. History is tragic, and many Christians 'confuse charity with animal warmth.' Others react too far; 'it is only another and equally arrogant way of liquidating Christianity to forget the promise of Easter in the despair of Good Friday.' The despair of Pascal, Kierkegaard and Bloy was a necessary astringent, but we now need 'the builders of hopes and duties'.

For its new hope and its new sense of duty Personalism does not look to any existing system of ideas, but to a rectification of consciousness. 'What makes Personalism very difficult for some to understand is that they are trying to find a system, whereas Personalism is perspective, method, exigency.' The centre of the meaning of history is the person — not the individual. Individualism begins with the idea of a self and a society. Personalism cannot exist with that artificial separation, the result of excessive rationalism; it is itself the growing together of the self and society. The very idea of salvation has been distorted by individualism; the true salvation of Christ is collective. The idea of the new man in Pauline theology is collective. Patristic literature is concerned with man and not men. If individualism is a betrayal of the person, so is totalitarianism; but in our own day Leviathan is to be resisted by personalising collectivism and not by restoring individualism. The life of the person is the life of the self with and in the non-self. The true movement of personalisation is the constant surpassing of the individual; the true movement of history is the surpassing of man by man.

Mounier says again and again that Personalism is a perspective and not a system; but a perspective involves a view of existing systems. Personalism runs side by side with Marxism and Existentialism and Mounier sees both as a mixture of wheat and chaff. The word 'Marxism' 'is used to cover both archaic materialisms and an effort to conceive the global human reality of the future.' Existentialism may mean a sense of the plenitude or of the nothingness of existence. Mounier is on the side of optimism as long as it means creative effort and war on despair; of pessimism as long as it means war on the hope of comfort and short-term results; of Existentialism as

long as it means commitment and the assumption of responsibility. He is against Manichaeism and the kind of spiritual purity which involves withdrawal from life; his Personalism transcends the dilemma of the absolute and the relative in much the same way as it does the dilemma of the individual and society.

Personalism is not, he says, political. To the Personalist every political issue is a separate, and moral, issue. But it is here that the subtlety of Mounier's thinking approaches ambiguity. The life of the person is one of self-transcendence; and to Mounier this means permanent revolution. Péguy said the revolution would be moral or nothing; Mounier said the moral revolution would be economic or nothing. He followed Marx to the extent of according the primacy to economic factors *at this stage of history*. But he hoped that Europe might be painlessly operated upon. It is here that one would like to know how specifically Mounier was writing for the political situation as he knew it in France.

'Personalism,' writes Leslie Paul in his interesting Foreword 'has proved an extremely difficult article to export.' The Dutch and British imitators of Personalism have found it difficult to keep in step with the French prototype, he suggests, because Mounier is too cavalier in his re-interpretation of the idea of liberty and insufficiently shocked by the Russian Terror. This may well be an important reason. But none of the anti-defeatisms of France seem to export well. Perhaps it is because the problems they are designed to solve have not been felt so acutely outside France. They are anti-rationalist, anti-materialist, ant-capitalist; and perhaps France has suffered more than ourselves, in the last hundred years or so, from the more extreme forms of rationalism, materialism and capitalism. 1789 left France with a permanent list towards revolution, and in the effort to keep the ship upright, some curiously exaggerated attitudes were struck and rigidly maintained.

It is difficult to be objective about prophetic writing. One can point to the special pleading, to the intellectual high-handedness—but this means rejecting prophecy as a mode. One can accuse Mounier of romanticism—Leslie Paul writes of the 'courage and smiling youthfulness which graced his whole life with a blessed prolongation of studenthood'; but his is the kind of youthfulness which individuals and civilisation outlive, as they grow old, to their spiritual peril. Mounier managed both to keep a grasp on reality and to grasp it joyfully. If his readers do not go the whole way with him when he rejects caution and stability, when he urges them to throw themselves into the breakers of the crisis with no thought but confidence in their mastery of the waves, they will at least be strengthened and heartened for the trials they do chose. Or suffer; though Personalism is chiefly a posture of attack and a sense of the glory of combat, of human destiny seen not so much reflecting the light of the eternal as offering the eternal its only means of self-realisation. Mounier's thinking may, as Leslie Paul suggests, be theologically suspect; it is certainly tonic.

BRITAIN AND THE MIDDLE EAST

By Sir Reader Bullard. *Hutchinson's University Library*. 7s. 6d.

Reviewed by H. S. Deighton

The overriding importance which the Middle East has today in the eyes of the British Foreign Office and defence departments is a feature of times, which, as historians think of these things, can only be termed modern, although they go back as far as the year 1792, when William Pitt first detected a serious danger to the British maritime system in the ever-advancing frontiers of the Russian Empire, even then engaged in building the fortress of Sevastopol, around which the Crimean War was principally to rage. But the connection is, of course, an older one than that. Many Englishmen took part in the Crusades, although these were primarily a French movement, and the commercial connection was important enough in the time of Elizabeth to account for the creation of an English Consulate at Aleppo, and for an incidental reference to that city in *Macbeth*. Many centuries earlier the Phoenicians had traded with

the tin miners of Cornwall. Any attempt to write a comprehensive account of this connection might well be the work of an academic lifetime. Indeed, the very idea has about it something of the flavour of that long list of unwritten masterpieces of which Lord Acton's projected *History of Liberty* is only the most notorious example. Sir Reader Bullard is not a professional academic, although it should be added at once that in neither accurate learning nor the power to express it is there anything in this book with which the most self-critical professional historian would find it necessary to reproach himself. The author has spent the last few decades closely involved in the affairs of the Middle East in the service of the Foreign Office, ending his career as Minister (subsequently Ambassador) in the Persian capital during the critical years of the recent war. His knowledge of the area is profound, and his understanding of its peoples appears to be informed by an affection for them which is, however, agreeably and unusually detached. The book surveys the subject shortly, but adequately, from the period of the Crusades, through the largely commercial connection of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, until the beginnings of the Eastern Question proper led Britain to the policy of 'bolstering up the Turk', which seemed inadequate after 1878, and was replaced by the more direct intervention of which the occupation of Cyprus and Egypt were symptomatic. More than half of it, however, is concerned with the most recent period, from the outbreak, in 1914, of the war which brought the Turkish Empire to an end, to the complexities of the second post-war settlement, and to a discussion in the epilogue of the future both of the area and of the British connection with it. It is the first serious attempt to produce a critical history of the Middle East from what may fairly be described as the official British point of view. It will be a standby for many years to come, and the only serious complaint which can be made against it is its brevity, which was imposed upon the author by the nature of the series of which it is a part. It is much to be hoped that Sir Reader Bullard has not written his last book about the scene of his official career.

One of the major literary events of 1951 will be the publication of

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THE DIARY OF A WRITER

By F. M. Dostoievsky

Translated and annotated by Boris Brasol
Cassell. Two vols. 50s.

Reviewed by Chris Massie

This is not, as all those interested in the great Russian novelist would hope, a private diary, the strictly personal record of his inmost thoughts and most fugitive experiences. What a revelation in psychopathology that might be! But no, it is very much the reverse of that, a most public affair, expressed rather too loudly, from the columns of *The Citizen*, a newspaper he edited during the late seventies and eighties.

These two volumes extend to nearly half a million words, and it appears that the whole mass of Dostoievsky's contributions to *The Citizen*, large and small, have been included without editing. Such trifles as his regret to a correspondent that an advertisement cannot be placed, are given space, and there is much unnecessary recapitulation. Still, for all this, the identity of the man is clearer for this oblique view into his personal feelings and approach to public affairs.

One is more than ever driven to feel that he was in love with suffering for its own sake, and that there was something in the abominable torture of the helpless, particularly women and children, which attracted him. How otherwise could he return again and again in these pages to that subject, repeating himself, and in some cases adding the horrors of his imagination to the horrors of fact? He asks in one case why a murderess, who slashed her victim repeatedly with a razor, should not have cut off her head, and then her nose and lips.

Here we are faced with something in Dostoievsky which terrifies and baffles the mind. It was part of his genius, we may say, to have seen possibilities beyond your common or garden murderer. Or is it that we fear to look at things, to look at ourselves steadily enough to recognise the devil in our hearts? In such matters Dostoievsky was unflinching.

All the specious and precious excuses for human nature, which have flooded the world since Freud had his dreams, are swept aside by Dostoievsky's confronting challenge—'There is good, and there is evil.' His life work comprises one long analysis of this first and last matter. Though his novels are period, they will never date for that reason. The secret of his genius is in his compelling, insistent approach to a Christ ascending out of Hell. By comparison, the copy-book Christ of Tolstoy is no more significant than the 'Yes, Jesus loves me,' of the Sunday schools.

He is concerned with sin, degradation, shame, reaching tentatively to some impossible redemption. He is saturated in this subject, for it is the only thing that contains the core of the matter, and is worth writing about. He does not pity man too much in his defeat, for it was for this challenge at the centre that he came into the world.

Again and again in the *Diary* he postulates this theory, this argument, from every angle. He is with the sinner reviling the redeemer, and with the redeemer in his love for the sinner. He writes as if he were on fire. The words burn; the sentences scorch. He is like a bonfire lit in utter darkness, throwing its flames into the void of night.

This *Diary* is valuable because it sets forth the passionately sincere and exhaustively-considered opinion of a great Russian about his own countrymen. In a sense, not even equalled by Dickens in his portrayal of Englishmen, it can be said that Dostoievsky gathered the whole of Russia into his arms, and one thing stands like rock—his testimony that the Russian people are pre-eminently a religious people.

Dostoievsky has never been popular in this country as Tolstoy and even Gorky were popular, but his immense power has received the highest tributes from the more subtle intellects among novelists of the West. To read him, though even then you may not understand the Russians, will probably help you to understand what they are not, which is almost as important.

These volumes are for the enthusiast. The matter they contain is unequal, but I for one am grateful this Diary was published; and I am sorry it has not been condensed and offered at a cheaper price.

THE LIBERAL IMAGINATION

By Lionel Trilling. *Secker & Warburg.* 15s.

Reviewed by Howard Sergeant

Although the essays which Mr. Lionel Trilling has collected in *The Liberal Imagination* were written over the last ten years, and range from critical examinations of the work of Henry James, Scott Fitzgerald, Kipling, Wordsworth and others, to studies of the Kinsey Report and the interactive relationship between literature and psychology, there is undoubtedly a unifying element which links them firmly together. As the title implies, this element may aptly, if broadly, be described as the liberal approach, and it has been adopted, with a consistency that is rare among critics today, towards problems involving not only literature, but also moral and social values, psychoanalysis and politics.

Not everyone will agree with the author's somewhat dogmatic assertion that there are no conservative *ideas* in current circulation—though he concedes that there are strong *impulses* to conservatism which are expressed 'only in action or in irritable mental gestures which seek to resemble ideas'; or accept his implicit identification of conservatism with reaction. Indeed, in the essay on 'The Meaning of a Literary Idea', he contradicts this statement by admitting that 'it is in general true that the modern European literature to which we can have an active reciprocal relationship. . . has been written by men who are indifferent to, or even hostile to, the tradition of democratic liberalism as we know it'—assuming, of course, that these writers had ideas to express. His use of the term 'conservatism', then, in this context at least, is confined to its narrowest political sense.

In such essays as 'The Function of the Little Magazine', 'Reality in America', 'The Sense of the Past', and 'Manners', 'Morals and the Novel', Mr. Trilling faces what he considers to be his own responsibility by establishing the real connections between culture and politics, and shows how the weakness of the one is reflected in the lack of direction in the other. In doing precisely that, he achieves a penetrating

Ready 7 June

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A REVIEW OF BRITISH POLITICAL AND SOCIAL TRENDS

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Writing from the impartial standpoint of one who recognizes the claims both of freedom and of social justice, Mr. Clarke passes in review the political and social trends which have given British democracy its present aspect. The book contains the lectures delivered publicly, in the autumn of last year, at the invitation of the Lowell Institute, Boston, Mass.

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Translated by Lord Sudley

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analysis of contemporary society. The application of his critical method outside the strictly literary field is demonstrated in 'Art and Neurosis' and, at its most effective, in his shrewd assessment of the Kinsey Report.

THE SCHOOLMASTER

By Aubrey de Selincourt. *John Lehmann.* 8s. 6d.

Reviewed by Patrick Home

Very few books have been written that have put the duties and position of the schoolmaster in such a balanced perspective as this one by Mr. Aubrey de Selincourt. Romantic conceptions of ideal teachers have varied from the high reforming zeal of Dr. Arnold to the box-office appeal of Mr. Chips. The schoolmaster still represents a depressed section of the community, badly neglected but necessary to the welfare of the country.

It is extremely hard for a schoolteacher to say: 'Now it's time I detached myself from my work to see where I'm going', to overhaul his progress and discover how far the narrow confines of school life are throttling him. From time to time, Mr. de Selincourt must have been very successful in doing this, otherwise he could not have written such a sound, sensible and helpful book after retirement. From 1921–45 he taught in four schools, specialising mainly in English Literature and the Classics. Now he looks back and surveys most sides of an educational field based on his own experience. He is not so dazzled by educational reforms over the past twenty years as to be hopelessly prejudiced against more traditional methods of teaching. Education to him signifies 'a balanced and integrated person', and the means there are at hand of achieving this. Before developing the main part of his book, he puts his finger on the heart of the matter by saying: 'We shall not get children well taught unless there are the right sort of men to teach them.' One feels that the main foundation is not as firm as it might be. For every good teacher there must be many who are barely fitted for the job, and, with overcrowded classrooms, the indifferent ones will soon sink into despair.

THE ESSENTIAL T. E. LAWRENCE

Edited by David Garnett. *Cape.* 12s. 6d.

Reviewed by Neville Braybrooke

Shortly after T. E. Lawrence's death in 1935, his brother published a series of recollections about him by different friends. This anthology was widely read at the time, but up to now an interesting inconsistency in one of the contributions seems to have been passed over: that contribution was by Bernard Shaw. Shaw's recollections of Lawrence fall into two parts: in the first part he describes him as a mystery man, in the second part as a man without mystery. Such a discrepancy can be accounted for in several ways. Perhaps, since a certain time elapsed between the writing of the two sections, Shaw did not bother to re-read what he had already written, or perhaps his integrity was such that he preferred to face the charge of inconsistency and to let what he originally wrote stand unaltered. Either view is possible, but there is a more probable one: namely that Shaw just changed his mind; that with time, and through closer friendship, the apparent mystery wore off. Certainly, the testimonies of other of his friends endorse this view; and in this sense Mr. Garnett's well-selected series of extracts from Lawrence's letters and writings lends strength to the argument.

The Press likes nothing better than a mystery man: in times of comparative peace (such as the thirties) it has first-rate value as sensational news. Throughout Lawrence's later life, this aspect of his character was played up for all it was worth, with the result that it created a legend: large numbers of the public refused to accept his death, maintaining that it was a secret service ruse and that he was still active. Even during the Second World War many believed that he was intimately connected with M.I.5. For the crux of the matter is that Lawrence's contribution to the Arab revolt was so daring and heroic that it both stayed in the minds of the public and coloured the minds of the public, making contemporary and more recent campaigns in other theatres of war appear dull and grey. But for Lawrence himself the Arab cause was merely a means

to an end—and that end was a great work of art, *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom.*

There are some artists who will throw themselves quite indiscriminately into adventures, so long as they are *adventures*; they become a means whereby their potentialities as artists may be released. Lawrence is a case in point; so is André Malraux. Yet whereas with Malraux it matters not whether these adventures are noble or dubious, with Lawrence, though he found such adventures in the East, he was 'continually and bitterly ashamed' of what he did; he was staking his integrity, his desire to produce 'a sort of introspective epic', upon a false ideal. For it was at the cost of the Arab betrayal that he was able to write such an epic, just as he hoped that his career in the Royal Air Force would provide him with the same stimulus once more. However, judging from the first published extracts which Mr. Garnett gives from *The Mint*, one fears that this hope was falsely founded. For although one notices again and again that ability to drive a Roman road through each subject, the earlier colour is lacking; the sizzling heat of the noonday sun is no longer there and in its place everything by comparison is cold and dim (shades of Hardy rather than Doughty!). To the extent that the *adventures* are less heroic, to that extent his prose becomes less exciting. The Puritan element is more pervasive and the style somewhat forced—characteristics which mark nearly all his letters, but are more under control in his writings about the desert. For if the truth will out, the essential T. E. Lawrence still remains *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom.*

ENGLISH INN SIGNS

By Larwood & Motten. Revised by Gerald Millar. *Chatto & Windus.* 42s.

A notice rather than a review is required for this fine volume which will be bought by everyone who can afford it. It is a revised edition of the classic *History of Signboards*, first published in 1866, with an index and many illustrations. Everything in this book is interesting, but note particularly the chapter on 'Corrupted and Refined Signs', and (among the modern signs) the rise and fall of the influence of Lovat Fraser.

Victoria and Albert Museum

THE 'V & A' IS A MUSEUM OF FINE AND APPLIED ART of all countries, periods and styles, including oriental art. It is under the Ministry of Education. The collections include: Architectural Details, Arms and Armour, the Art of the Book, Bronzes, Carpets, Clocks, Costumes, Cutlery, Drawings, Embroideries, Enamels, Engravings, Fabrics, Furniture, Glass, Gold and Silversmiths' Work, Ironwork, Ivories, Jewellery, Lace, Lithographs, Manuscripts, Metalwork, Miniatures, Musical Instruments, Oil Paintings, Posters, Pottery and Porcelain, Prints, Sculpture, Stained Glass, Tapestries, Theatre Art, Vestments, Watches, Water-Colours, Woodwork.

The European collections are mostly of Post-Classical art, from Early Christian times to the 19th century.

The Museum also includes the National Art Library (books and photographs on Art and allied subjects); the National Collections of Post-Classical Sculpture, of British Miniatures, and of Water-Colours; and the National Lantern Slide Loan Collection.

The Museum Galleries, for the first time in their history, are now being rearranged in two distinct, but equally important, groups. The *Primary Collections* (specially arranged in newly decorated galleries and mostly on the ground floor) will show the visitor a connected series of galleries in which masterpieces of all the arts are brought together by style, period or nationality, i.e., Early Mediaeval; Gothic; Renaissance; English 1500-1850; Continental, 1570-1825, Islamic; Far East; Indian (in the Indian Section). The *Secondary* or *Study Collections*, are arranged according to the material or class of object.

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THE CASE OF COMRADE TULAYEV

By Victor Serge. Translated from the French by Willard R. Trask. *Hamish Hamilton.* 12s. 6d.

Reviewed by Max Beloff

As someone whose business it is to expound academically the political system of the Soviet Union, I have long felt that the system is in fact one that cannot be described, but only apprehended. It is the novelist, not the historian, or the biographer, and still less the economist or sociologist, to whom we must look for enlightenment. *The Case of Comrade Tulayev* proves my point. Until further notice, this is number one on my list of recommended reading.

It should not be thought, however, that this profound and moving novel has been written to meet the current demands of the 'cold war'; though it doubtless owes to those demands its great success in the United States. It was, in fact, written between 1940 and 1942, first in France and then in Central America where its author, a Russian ex-Communist, died soon afterwards. While it was being written, the Soviet Union faced the crisis of the German attack, the eventual and inescapable advent of which overshadows its pages. But in essence it represents the reaction of someone formerly devoted to the Soviet cause towards the great 'purge' of the 1930s. It is thus almost contemporaneous in time, as well as similar in theme, to Arthur Koestler's *Darkness at Noon.* It is, however, a better though a less striking novel—its author, one feels, a subtler and more humane figure—the very opposite of the bloodless and rootless intellectual that Koestler has remained through all his political metamorphoses.

Darkness at Noon set out to demonstrate how a single individual might come to accept the idea of confessing to a crime he had not committed because it was the final service he could render to the cause in which he still believed. It had the logic of Euclid and the unity of construction of a classical drama. It provided an unmistakable answer to all those who wanted to know how and why the incomprehensible had happened. But life does not provide simple answers. Life, even in a totalitarian State, continues to be a mixture of impersonal ideas and personal impulses; it continues to sprawl untidily with maddening imprecision, despite the planners and their files. And Russia, Russia above all, is hardly to be reduced to a formula. Indeed, the more pressure is applied to mould it into shape, the more incalculable its responses. In one of the short scenes in which Serge, with great daring and complete success, brings in Stalin himself—a human and wholly creditable Stalin—he, the 'Chief', says to Kondratiev, an old revolutionary who is trying to report on the appalling mess the Russians have made in Spain (Serge's few pages on Spain are as revealing as the whole of Hemingway's book):

'I'd like to see you in my place, old man—that's something I'd like to see. Old Russia is a swamp—the farther you go, the more the ground gives, you sink in just where you least expect to . . . And then, the human rubbish . . . To remake the hopeless human animal will take centuries. I haven't got centuries to work with, not I . . .'

And so, when the ruthless and brutal Tulayev is killed on an impulse by a devoted young Communist who thinks he has been harming the Party, and it is essential that meaning shall be given to the assassination as part of a conspiracy, it is natural and inevitable that all sorts of lives should be affected, that all kinds of men should die, not because they had killed or could have killed Tulayev, but because, while they live, there must be a negative voice or the possibility of a negative voice. And how they respond will not depend upon some inner revolutionary logic which only a few will be resolute enough to cling to, but upon more human reactions of pride and hatred and despair. For the more self-conscious characters—the historian Rublev whose reactions are closest to those of Koestler's hero—the tragedy is the elimination of that first generation of revolutionaries who had worked with Lenin and dreamed dreams, to leave the way clear for empty careerists who batten on each other in loathing and fear. And this perhaps represents what the author himself felt; for the young people at the end are still working in hope. But

such is the book's fidelity to life that the reader may draw a different moral, when he reflects that those who die innocent have yet killed many innocents in their day, that one does not have to be an Old Bolshevik in order to have the right to live, that if Revolutions eat their children, it is because of the sin of presumption that enters with Revolution, and the monstrous claim that society can be remade. One can almost be sorry for a Stalin who has had the monstrous legacy of a Lenin to carry forward. It is a measure of the rounded fidelity of Serge's complex and magisterially-told tale, that each can see reflected in it some vision of the ultimate reality of the great nightmare of our age.

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EVER THINE By Hester Chapman. *Cape.* 15s.

MEG By Theodora Keogh. *Peter Davies.* 9s. 6d.

Reviewed by Stevie Smith

There is a peculiar fascination about the writing of Mr. Newby, a stammering, shy flatness which the unimaginative reader may mistake for dullness; he is like Dumling, the fairy prince, who was by no means such a simpleton as his enemies counted on. Sometimes he is clumsy with words. In this novel, the hero, Tom Passmore, carries something of the writer's own character. He is young; he is innocent; he is prim. He is afraid he is 'rather provincial'. With a comical effect (which may not be quite intended) he will pause every now and then to worry about this. But then he will throw it off, and throw off also the temptation to go away and be solitary and watch the trees and the rivers. Because his ruling passion is curiosity about the people he meets, the trees and the sunny landscape must wait while he flings himself again at the throats of his companions to have the life out of them; what are they made of? Tom has been invalided out of the army and gone to Egypt to have a lecturing job at Cairo University, about the time of Alamein. The innocent eye fastens upon Egypt; everything is fresh, the spirits lift, the mind is taken off.

Tom's holiday euphoria emboldens the shy, inquisitive creature to make friends with Guy, a fellow-lecturer. He is soon on visiting terms, so bold he is beneath an Egyptian sun. Guy has married a Greek girl called Renee, whose character singularly fails to emerge; she is as much an enigma as Conrad's women. What on earth does she want? One never knows. Guy soon dies. He was an Englishman whose nationality was like a toothache. He longed to un-English himself and be international and mysterious. So he did not tell his parents about his marriage. Back to England comes Tom to tell them—but not to tell them that he is in love with Renee himself; in his awkward way he is quite infatuated. The parents of Guy are startling portraits: the old man with his carefully-acquired country interests, his farming, his city train exchanged for the punctual morning scrutiny of fields and crops; the old lady with her fear of sunlight, her gentleness of manner and her underlying mad strength. Tom is like a man caught by witchcraft—this couple is a respectable witch and warlock; he is properly held and loved and he loves them too and thinks he is at home at last. But now Renee arrives, destitute, the daughter-in-law who must be received. The strange story winds languidly to a finish, taking on its way a muffed murder. Everything is muffed and awkward and languid: Tom is a languid muff; but it does not matter. What the book is really about is the witchcraft spider-web of love and affection that seems such a fair house of security. But all the time the wind is howling and the savage soul is kicking the herding creatures to go out and be alone for its own pleasure.

Mr. Sansom is a master of words; he uses them like colours to paint pictures; he cannot have enough of the look of things. In this book he is the narrator, the 'I' of it, a writer, nose to trail. First he runs into his old friend Harry Camberley. Harry, the simple soul, lover of stock phrases, Harry of 'old man', 'let's adjourn', '*après vous*', 'Why, if it isn't you, you old sonofer'. ('Known the chap for years,' says Harry, 'chap's a good fellow. Scribbler, you know.') The scribbler, sticking tight where another 'old school pal' might have fled, is rewarded. Harry is now in love with Eve and she is indeed something to write about.

She is a pretty, lost girl who lives in a world of dreams that come from the ladies' magazines. She is as talented a make-believer as Pirandello's heroine in *Vestire gli Ignudi;* she is very like her. The narrator strips for action: 'Slowly I search the impact of Eve's glamour . . . two buttons missing . . . prickles of shaved hair . . . frosting through her stockings . . . a pale and flourishing but not unattractive moustache.' And these master-strokes for the fine hair, 'it had the soft pewterish quality of sodium, camembert of metals . . . take a brownish nugget, there under the thin brown skin lies a soft smooth creamy metal . . . throw your nugget into a bowl of water and it catches fire.' The hollow girl Eve fills her hollowness with life-stories that are never twice the same . . . unhappy penurious home life, rich landed home life in country mansion, depraved father, nice father, oppressive mum, no mum . . . life alone in continental dangers, sofa scenes but no seduction 'you know'. When Harry and Eve go to the south of France, it is not surprising that the narrator goes too. And now we hear again about Mr. Sansom's favourite territory—likely soon to be as forbidden to him as surely the Far East is by now to Somerset Maugham—the familiar mosquitoes, the dirty tideless beaches, the smell of gasoline and oil-cooking. This time we also have a smash-up on the Corniche ('le pile-up Anglais', because they will drive furiously in the hot sun after drinking too much). But there is one fine, sanded beach free of gasoline and tourists, where the narrator, resting himself, sees through tall grass the fair girl, Eve, embraced by the garage young man. Then back to England to face the bouncing friends who drop round to the Camberley's house in stockbroker's county (Uplands, Oxley Heath). The dog-loving woman is very good; she calls her dogs 'fellows' but is loved by the sad city man. About the same moment as the jam bottle blows up in the dog-lover's face, Eve is delivered of a baby whose full Gallic appearance only poor Harry fails to observe. The narrator, one feels, by this time could not be more satisfied, nor the reader either. It is a rich subtle book of many flashes.

Miss Collis is a beginner to keep an eye on, but in this first novel she has chosen

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a theme which would put the most experienced at a disadvantage. It is the fall of a child's mind from neurosis into madness. The little boy Johnny is for Miss Collis an object of love and pity. That she does not succeed in making the reader share her feelings is not to be wondered at; it would be an almost impossible feat. For unhappily the overriding truth about madness is that it deforms. So great is this deforming power that a child is no more and no less lamentable in madness than an adult; there is no age in these ruins, childhood is no longer distinctive. This Johnny of whom she writes with such eloquence—and she is eloquent—is to begin with no more than a frightened unhappy child, timidly, cunningly outwitting the unimaginative servants, peering out of the forbidden window, bustled out of doors when his mother is lying dead in her bed . . . told that she has 'gone away'. He goes to stay with a romping family of country cousins. Here the characterisation is excellent: one warms to the donnish uncle, the affectionate aunt, the boy-cousin who makes do with this gaping companion, the girls who are all giggles and mockery. But soon the boy's hypochondriacal father comes home from abroad with a hundred medicine bottles, and the poor little child brought back to London, sent to a day school where he is brutally bullied, goes slowly off his head. The end is tragic—he walks into a fire at his cousin's house and is killed. How guiltily relieved the cousins feel, and so, I fear, does the reader. This *parti pris de Johnny* was perhaps a mistake, but the book as a whole is impressive.

Miss Chapman's heroine, Victoire, is a beautiful witty creature and she is so full of fatal power that her husband by this time is but a wan shadow, and Geoffrey, her admirer, who tells the story, is not much better. She is meant to be *la belle dame sans merci* and, such is Miss Chapman's skill, she does seem something like this. Her husband Denis is headmaster of a fashionable prep. school, in which milieu Miss Chapman is well at home. The school belongs to his family who are rich city merchants; it is their hobby. Victoire, in order to keep her husband feeling miserable, will not have any children of their own, but she adopts two orphan cousins, to mould them. The boy is meant to be an intellectual, the girl, a girl of the world. But he turns out to be good at nothing but games and handwork; it is the girl who is the clever one. The boy dotes upon the lady and tries so hard to please her by being a learned child that in the end he falls a prey to morbid fancies and drowns himself, having failed all his exams. The girl is made of stouter stuff but she does not fare much better; this emotional childish rebel is no match for Victoire; she does not die, but her life is shattered. Geoffrey, the spineless drooping lover, plays the part of a Greek chorus, discoursing at length upon the troubles 'within the house'. The plot is plainly melodrama and Victoire is murderable, but it is a good tale, calling again to sunny light the long buried days of King Edward VII, in whose reign it mostly takes place, and displaying a number of persons of interest and eccentricity.

Meg is another example of authors falling in love with themselves when young; especially women authors are apt to do this. It is not explicit, the ladies are not writing autobiographies, but all the same, there it is. We had it in *The Constant Nymph*; we had it in Miss Macaulay's *The World My Wilderness*; we shall have it a good many times more, until perhaps the ladies are chased out of it by recognising it for what it is—the waif as object of sexual desire. It accounts for the tension of the emotion, the excitement, that makes the books so popular. If there is anybody who does not recognise this in Miss Theodora Keogh's book, *Meg*, he or she must be remarkably obtuse. Given this obtuseness, the story is no more than the adventures of a rich little New York schoolgirl who runs in her leisure time with East Side ragamuffins, is seduced by one of them, is confronted by several varieties of sexual perversion (including the love of her headmistress for a wild painting girl) and of course is all the time just an innocent little girl with grubby wrists and face in contrast to the white skin on the rest of 'the bony little body'. *Meg* should be the book about a waif to end all books about waifs. One does not suppose it will be.

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